

news

significant shorts

Bomb drops into woman's lap in Belfast café

An incendiary bomb dropped into a woman's lap as she took her seat in a south Belfast coffee shop yesterday. The small device, wrapped in tissue paper, was hidden underneath a table at the shop in the Finaghy district. It dropped to the floor when the customer got to her feet. Staff alerted the police, who evacuated the immediate area before Army explosives experts were called in. Police later confirmed the device was an incendiary.

Sean Corrigan, a Catholic, who owns My Granny's Pantry coffee shop, said he was stunned by the attack. "The woman was very calm until she realised it was a bomb. She couldn't believe it," he said. "I've no idea why the shop was targeted."

Lake rescue attempt on girl, 7

The body of a seven-year-old girl was dragged from a lake yesterday after a car plunged into the water at Womersley, near Selby, North Yorkshire. The girl had been under the water for at least 20 minutes and attempts were being made by doctors to revive her, police said. Police said it was not known how many people were in the car and divers were searching the lake.

Green-belt factory gets go-ahead

Ministers have over-ruled one of their own planning inspectors to allow a micro-electronics plant to be built on green-belt land outside Sutton Coldfield, near Birmingham. Green-belt land is meant to be protected from construction to stop cities sprawling, but planning minister Richard Caborn said there were "very special circumstances" – the urgent need to diversify the West Midlands economy and the lack of an alternative site for the plant. The planning application for the 140-acre site at Minworth was made by the Government's West Midlands Development Agency, but it is thought that Dutch multinational Philips is interested in occupying the factory.

Nicholas Schoon

Alien sex fiend is new Modesty Blaise



The role of comic strip heroine Modesty Blaise, reportedly turned down by Uma Thurman because it involved nudity, has gone to the virtually unknown actress Natasha Henstridge (left). Ms Henstridge is best known for playing an alien sex fiend in the science fiction film *Species*.

Modesty Blaise, the sexy adventuress from the novels by Peter O'Donnell and the long-running syndicated comic strip that appears in the London *Evening Standard*, was brought to the screen in 1966 by Monica Vitti and co-starred Terence Stamp. The new version will be directed by Frenchman Luc Besson, responsible for this year's box office blockbuster *The Fifth Element*.

David Lister

Children's home worker suspended

A care worker has been suspended as part of an inquiry into allegations of physical and sexual abuse at children's homes dating back more than 30 years, it emerged yesterday. Kirklees Social Services in West Yorkshire has received four complaints, some referring to the Sixties, from people who say they were mistreated while in care in Dewsbury. West Yorkshire police are working with social services and the NSPCC on the inquiry.

Neo-Nazi concert in South Wales

Police are to mount a major operation today to prevent any trouble from a planned neo-Nazi rock concert. But senior officers yesterday were still trying to locate the South Wales venue of the so-called "Aryan Fest" advertised in leaflets circulating among ultra-right extremist groups in Europe. Special protection is being given to the Asian festival at Cardiff International Arena to celebrate the 50th anniversary of independence for India and Pakistan.

Windsor castle oil well abandoned

A Canadian oil exploration company has abandoned its plans to drill an exploration borehole beneath the Queen's Windsor Castle after its government licence to do so expired.

Birmingham lands Eurovision

Birmingham's National Indoor Arena was announced as the venue for next May's Eurovision song contest, beating venues in London, Manchester, Cardiff and Glasgow to stage the event.

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

Austria	.....	Sch40	Norway	.....	F5.00
Belgium	.....	BF680	Italy	.....	L4.500
Canada	.....	P6300	Madagascar	.....	E6325
Cyprus	.....	CE120	Mali	.....	43 cents
Denmark	.....	Dkr18	Norway	.....	Nkr20
France	.....	Ffr14	Portugal	.....	E6325
Germany	.....	DM4.5	Sweden	.....	Sk21
Greece	.....	Dr550	Switzerland	.....	Sfr4.00
Luxembourg	.....	Lfr50	USA	.....	\$3.00

OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTIONS

By mail, 13 weeks: Europe £110.75; Zone 1 (Middle East, America, Africa and India) £184.00; Zone 2 (Far East and Australasia) £206.70. To order, please send cheque payable to The Independent International Media Services Ltd to 43 Millharbour, London E14 9HR or telephone 0171-536 6288. Credit cards welcome.

Back issues of the Independent are available from: Historic Newspapers, telephone 01939 840370.

people



Ken Rutherford talks to the Princess on her arrival in Sarajevo yesterday (Photograph: Reuters)

Victim's praise for Diana's message on landmines

Diana, Princess of Wales, arrived in Bosnia yesterday, and earned the praise of a landmine victim, who said people around the world would not be distracted from her visit's message by world headlines about her new "romance".

The princess flew into Sarajevo for the start of a three-day visit to develop her campaign against landmines by meeting maimed victims, who regard themselves as "forgotten". She smiled and was clearly relaxed as she alighted from the unmarked white jet in which she flew from London.

She was welcomed by a small group of officials and charity workers, before boarding a car carrying the markings of Norwegian People's Aid. Ken Rutherford, co-founder of the Landmine Survivors' Network, which arranged the trip, was on the tarmac to welcome her. He had lost both his legs in a landmine explosion in Somalia.

"I have lost both my legs and I have testified to the US Senate and spoken to a lot of politicians," said Mr Rutherford. "I have met the Princess and she is a real person. She cares about this issue in her heart."

"You don't come to Bosnia for a vacation. I think most people around the world will see her just as I do. She really cares."

American-born Mr Rutherford was an aid worker in Somalia in 1993 when he lost his right leg, and part of his left needed amputating.

He founded Landmine Survivors' Network in September 1995 with Jerry White, also 33, who lost his

foot when a landmine exploded on a hiking holiday in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights in 1984.

Mr Rutherford said he met the Princess when she had addressed a meeting in London about landmines earlier this year.

"It's incredible that she has come to Bosnia. She is the most renowned face in the world and for her to support what we are doing is incredible."

He believed she had been particularly attracted to the fact that the network was particularly concerned about landmine survivors long after they were injured.

The security surrounding the visit was so tight that some of the families the Princess was to meet were unaware that she was coming, he said. Others had been told only in the last few days. Security considerations meant there were few further details of the Princess's itinerary, but she was due to meet groups of mainly military victims of landmines during an evening at an hotel in Tuzla last night.

International discussion about the need to ban landmines had tended to ignore the problems faced by the victims, said Mr Rutherford. "These people become forgotten, shut off in their own homes."

Diana had just returned from a Mediterranean holiday with the millionaire playboy Dodi Fayed, 41, son and heir of Harrods owner, Mohamed al-Fayed.

According to reports, the Princess was seen arriving at his apartment on Thursday night, apparently to have dinner with him, only hours before her departure for Bosnia.

Heart surgeons fix it for Sir Jimmy Savile

Sir Jimmy Savile was moved out of intensive care yesterday morning, after a quadruple heart by-pass operation. He was said to be in good spirits, chatting to doctors and nurses as well-wishers rang the hospital switchboard.

The 71-year-old veteran broadcaster and charity fundraiser, who was admitted to Killingbeck Hospital in Leeds, West Yorkshire, underwent a three-hour quadruple bypass operation on Thursday.

His secretary, Janet Cope, said: "He's talking to the surgeons and nurses, smiling and responding well to the operation."

Sir Jimmy learned he needed the heart operation four years ago but continually put it off, Mrs Cope said. "He kept going to check-ups and putting it off until a few weeks ago, when his sister Chrissie, who was 76, died from a heart attack."

"I think that made him realise it was time for him to go in to for the operation."

Sir Jimmy was expected to remain in hospital for two weeks and must then take it easy for three or four months.

Lecturer sacked for saying child sex 'harmless'

Chris Brand, the Edinburgh University lecturer who claimed child sex was harmless in certain circumstances, was sacked yesterday after a tribunal found him guilty of gross misconduct.

The psychology don's claims on the Internet that paedophilia was acceptable, as long as the child was over 12 and of above average intelligence, were condemned as "disgraceful" by Professor Sir Stewart Rutherford, principal of the university.

Mr Brand, 52, was suspended from his teaching and administrative duties last November following complaints about his conduct. A university disciplinary tribunal,



submitted its report to the principal. The university faced down calls for Mr Brand's resignation earlier last year after he wrote a book claiming whites were more intelligent than blacks.

The more recent case was extraordinary, the tribunal found, because he had "courted further publicity and shown a desire to pursue his own goals at the expense of others." The effect of his remarks was "to undermine completely any of the remaining trust and confidence which members of the Department might have had in Mr Brand as a colleague."

Lucy Ward

briefing

BROADCASTING

Radio 1 listeners fall below 10m for the first time

Radio 1's forthcoming 30th anniversary celebrations had some of the fizz removed yesterday, when it emerged that its listenership has plunged below the 10 million mark for the first time.

The latest statistics from ratings researcher Rajar show that the BBC's pop and prattle service for young people is down to 9.67 million listeners – just over half the audience it drew when it was launched in 1967. The loss of 1.3 million listeners year-on-year is largely due to Chris Evans' abrupt departure from its breakfast show in January.

Evans' fans have been retuning in recent months to Virgin Radio or vibrant local music stations such as Capital and Heart FM in London. In overall national terms, commercial radio is enjoying unprecedented popularity, now accounting for 50.2 per cent of all listening. Radio 3's audience of 2.3 million is just half that of its commercial rival, Classic FM.

The latest Rajar results would have been even bleaker for the Beeb if Radio 2 and Radio 4 hadn't boosted their popularity. Critical attention will be focused on the latter to see whether it gains or loses listeners as a result of major scheduling changes it has just announced. But the impact of the controversial reforms won't register with Rajar for some time.

Rob Brown

HEALTH

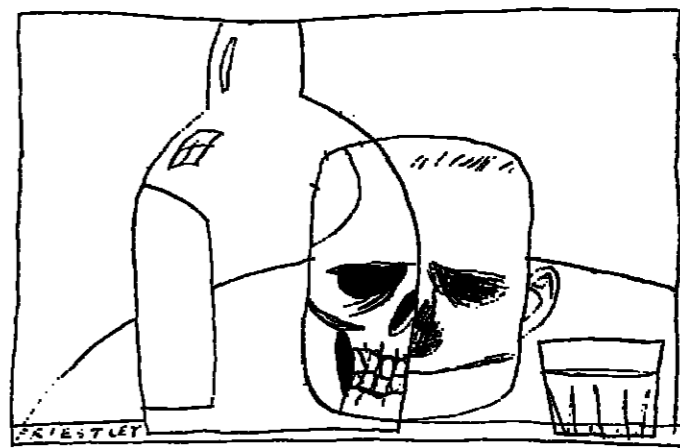
Alcoholism cuts lives short in Russia

Russians appear to be drinking themselves to death at a rate unmatched anywhere else in modern times, researchers say. The average life expectancy for Russian men fell by 6.2 years and for women by 3.4 years between 1990 and 1994, and a major reason for that was a high consumption of alcohol, according to a report in the *Lancet*.

"The available evidence suggests... that the very high alcohol consumption, together with the habit of binge-drinking, may be resulting in a very large number of circulatory deaths in middle age," according to the report.

The team led by David Leon of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine worked with staff from the Center of Demography and Human Ecology in Moscow. The report was based on an overall analysis of statistics between 1984 and 1994.

It said average life expectancy at birth for Russian men fell from 63.8 years in 1990 to 57.6 years in 1994 and for women from 74.4 years to 71 years. "The magnitude and steepness of the fluctuations in mortality rates and life expectancy for Russia are without parallel in the modern era."



RESEARCH

Protein link to brain diseases

British and German researchers have reported significant progress in understanding how brain cells die in people suffering from Huntington's chorea, as well as two other degenerative brain diseases.

The findings of the researchers, published in the journal *Cell*, indicate that Huntington's chorea is caused by a build-up of proteins inside the cell, which eventually kills it. A similar process may be at work in two other crippling brain disorders, Alzheimer's disease and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

Priority will now be given to screening for drugs that inhibit the protein buildup. "We all know what we think the primary event [cause] is, so we can start working on a cure, perhaps by stopping these aggregations from forming," said Dr Gillian Bates, of Guy's Hospital in London.

Huntington's chorea is an hereditary degenerative disease that causes premature death of nerve cells in the brain, triggering mental and physical deterioration. It is characterised by involuntary movements of the body and dementia.

TELECOMS

Dialling a number you won't forget

Business telephone numbers could be easier to remember, under plans announced yesterday by telecommunications watchdog, Ofcom.

Under the proposals, companies and public organisations can choose to change their current numbers to one prefixed with "05", regardless of where they are in the country. The number will be followed by three digits which identify the company and six more to get the individual line.

The 05 scheme will be voluntary and numbers will be available for distribution from 1998. Ofcom hopes it will be up and running by 1999. The plans have been initiated in order to reduce the pressure on 01 numbers and lessen the need for future code changes.

Don Cruickshank, Director General of Telecommunications, at Ofcom, said: "These plans are in response to clear customer demand. The scheme is primarily intended for organisations who operate extensive multi-site networks of their own, although smaller companies will also be able to use it."

NATURE

Birds feel heat of global warming

Many British birds now lay their eggs nine days earlier each spring than they did a quarter century ago, say researchers, and they suggest man-made global warming is behind the change.

The British Trust for Ornithology analysed nest-laying records for 65 native species from 1971 to last year, kept by hundreds of dedicated amateur ornithologists.

It found that for 20 of those species, the average date when the first egg was laid became significantly earlier over the 25 years, and for only one species, the stock dove, did that date become significantly later.

For the remainder of the birds, no strong trend in egg-laying dates emerged – although there was a weak, overall tendency towards earlier clutches. Warmth earlier in the year makes plants and insects grow more rapidly, which provides more food for baby birds – thus there is competitive advantage in earlier egg-laying. The research is published in this week's issue of the science journal *Nature*.

Nicholas Schoon

Read

THE INDEPENDENT

online every day on AOL

Call 0800 376 5376

for FREE software – quote "Independent"



NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING
Recycled paper made up 41.2% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1996

A slimmer phone at a slimmer price...

...the Motorola SlimLite

Another exclusive offer from Talkland!

This SlimLite is both slim (20mm) and weighing in at a mere 122 grams, it truly is a phone which fits into your pocket.

With up to 40 hours of standby and 140 minutes talktime, large screen and silent vibrating alert this phone is hard to better. And with £30 off this or the Motorola 8700 there has never been a better time to buy.

For your nearest store call 0800 259 259



MOTOROLA

Talkland

£30 OFF
voucher

Code No: T7005

To receive £30 off either the Motorola SlimLite or the Motorola 8700, simply take this coupon into your nearest Talkland store. They will complete it for you.

Name.....

New Mobile No.....

IMEI No.....

Branch.....

Terms & Conditions: 1. Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer. 2. Offer subject to status, connection to Vodafone and entering into a new 12 month 1GB deal. 3. Offer valid between 16/7/97 and 29/9/97. 4. Full Terms & Conditions are available from Talkland International (UK), Pinewood House, Bamber Park, Aylesbury Road, Aylesbury, Bucks, MK17 3JG.

50 من الاموال

Killer had boy in his sights

Steve Boggan

A heroin dealer whose five-year-old stepson was killed in a drug-deal shooting has told detectives that he believes the boy was deliberately targeted.

Before returning to his home under heavy police guard yesterday, John Bates, the stepfather of Dillon Hull, revealed that his assailant has waited until the child victim was by his side before opening fire.

Dillon was shot through the head and Mr Bates suffered a minor stomach wound in the attack last Wednesday.

Angry residents in Deane, Bolton, Greater Manchester, launched a petition yesterday to have Mr Bates, 28, and Dillon's mother, Jane Hull, 29, moved from their home in Jauncey Street as it emerged that both had appeared in court last year on heroin dealing-related charges.

Then, Mr Bates was jailed for

21 months, while Recorder Arthur Noble, sitting at Burnley Crown Court, put Ms Hull on probation with the warning: "I hope that you will bring your son up properly and make sure he doesn't have any such involvement [with drugs]."

However, his warning went unheeded. Ms Hull gave birth to another boy, Codie, three weeks ago which, according to her father, Robert Hull, was born a heroin addict.

"He was born addicted to drugs," Mr Hull told the *Manchester Evening News*. "That's why he's still in hospital. Jane is a registered heroin addict."

Bolton Social Services said there had been no care orders relating to either Dillon or Codie, but a spokesman said the family was "known" to social workers.

Detective Superintendent Peter Ellis, the man leading the murder inquiry, said Mr Bates had been able to give him a full account of the attack before dis-



Dillon Hull, pictured with his mother, Jane Hull

'The man in the yellow Metro has chosen to carry out that attack when John Bates was with Dillon'

charging himself from hospital and returning home in the early hours of yesterday.

Mr Ellis said the assailant had waited in a yellow Metro while Mr Bates was alone in the street looking for Dillon. Once he found the boy, the gunman launched his attack.

"Mr Bates believes that the man had every opportunity to

attack him at that time but, for reasons best known to that individual, he did not take that opportunity," said Mr Ellis.

The man in the yellow Metro has chosen to carry out that attack... when John Bates was with Dillon. To me, that demonstrates the callous nature of the man I am looking for.

Greater Manchester Police yes-

terday offered a £10,000 reward for information leading to the killer's conviction.

The decision to allow Mr Bates to return home was taken after long consultations with police but it provoked an angry response from neighbours.

"We had to respect their wishes to return to their home and their community," said Mr Ellis.

"There is a increased uniformed presence and we have taken other measures to guarantee the safety of the bereaved family and people of Deane."

However, many residents said Mr Bates's return spelled danger for their children.

"I am absolutely furious that they should let him back here," said Bert Pimley, 58. "I feel very sorry for what has happened but there are repercussions for other people. I have 14 grandchildren, but there's no way I can let them visit while he's here."

Details of Ms Hull's court

case, published in the *Lancashire Evening Telegraph*, showed that she only avoided a jail sentence for allowing her home to be used for drug dealing because she had Dillon.

Mr Bates told the court that she had "turned a blind eye" to his dealing so he could fund his own heroin addiction.

The court was told that Ms Hull had tried to remove Mr Bates from her home because of his drug abuse but she allowed him back because she was "foud" of him.

Judge Noble said he would spare her from jail for the sake of Dillon and so put her on probation for two years instead. He said Ms Hull appeared to have been "dominated" by Mr Bates and advised her not to allow him back into her home until he had weaned himself off heroin.

However, instead of weaning Mr Bates off heroin, it appears that she became hooked on the drug herself.

Philistines: That's what Sir Colin Davis thinks about the Cabinet

David Lister
Arts News Editor

Tonight's Promenade concert at the Royal Albert Hall is unique. It will undoubtedly be the only time during the whole promenade season that the orchestra is in tears at the end of the concert.

The teenagers of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain will be releasing pent-up emotion at the climax of their year as they perform Sibelius, Vaughan Williams and Tippett. But their conductor tonight, the illustrious Sir Colin Davis, has tears of genuine rage over the fact that Britain's premier youth orchestra is in perpetual financial instability.

In an interview with *The Independent*, Sir Colin denounced the Government as "philistine" for refusing to invest in youthful talent. It is the first time this term of cultural abuse has been aimed at the new Labour administration. Coming from one of the world's most renowned conductors it is likely to sting both the Prime Minister and his Culture Secretary Chris Smith.

The NYO, founded in 1948, has produced numerous fa-

mous musicians and conductors such as Sir Simon Rattle and Mark Elder. It costs £550,000 a year to run and receives only £25,000 from the Arts Council and £800 from the Department of Education. The Arts Council cannot give more as it does not give major revenue funding grants to amateur organisations.

Michael de Grey, chief executive of the orchestra, said: "Our future is insecure. We are dependent on private sponsorship and it only needs one sponsor to pull out and we're under threat. It's been a battle to raise sponsorship every year."

"Yet being in this orchestra changes people's lives, even if they don't become musicians," he says. "It provides them with discipline, teamwork, friendship and the pursuit of excellence."

The NYO has a lottery application for £500,000 with the Arts Council, but even if they receive this sum, it could not go towards their core funding which takes 150 talented youngsters on three residential tuition courses a year, culminating in the Proms.

Sir Colin Davis is now pub-



Sir Colin Davis rehearsing the National Youth Orchestra for tonight's Prom concert

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

licly advocating that what is really needed is a rethink of how public money is channelled to the arts.

At present it goes to the arts institutions which reach the biggest audiences or provide ground-breaking radical new work. But there should be a third strand for funding. Namely, highly talented, amateur outfits which bring young people into creating and performing.

Sir Colin, who has just led the NYO in three days of lengthy

rehearsals, for tonight's Prom, forfeiting his own fee, said: "It's disgraceful that the NYO hardly gets any public money. The government advocates improving the quality of life. But I fear the worst. I fear it's government by philistines for the rest of my life. After the War, when I was a boy, there were all kinds of intellectuals in the government - cultivated people. We need a bit more of that vision now."

"All the NYO needs is £50,000 a year. Think what it

does for these kids. They are welcome everywhere they go. Mr Blair cannot talk about 'Education, education, and education' while grants for the arts concentrate on the big institutions and leave this young people's orchestra searching for money."

He added: "Without sounding pretentious, those of us who are older ought to work with the young - give them a taste of what it costs to play this kind of music, the emotional cost, the mental cost, the tech-

nical cost."

Sir Colin, former music director at the Royal Opera House, said: "We [top conductors] get paid a lot, probably too much. You've got to plough something back."

Clare Duckworth, 17, from Bolton, leader of the orchestra, said: "Tonight is the peak for the NYO. It's very sad as well. We've been together for an intense time and got to know each other so well. We all tend to cry a lot at the end of the Prom, or actually in it."

Business deal that cost Grobbelaar dear

Michael Streeter

For the rest of his life Bruce Grobbelaar, the Clown Prince of football, will regret the day in July 1992 when he walked into a Chester wine bar to meet businessman Christopher Vincent.

It was their business deal and resulting friendship which was to lead to the allegations of match-fixing against Grobbelaar and spark off nearly three years of investigation culminating in two trials.

Although cleared yesterday, the case has been, financially at least, a Pyrrhic victory. He faces legal bills of tens of thousands of pounds, the case has coincided with the final stages of his soccer career - he left Plymouth Argyle at the end of last

season - and put tremendous pressure on both his personal and business life.

Grobbelaar, an ebullient personality who achieved superhero status on Merseyside in a Liverpool side full of heroes, had gone into business with fellow Zimbabwean Vincent. Knowing his playing days were numbered, he aimed to set up his future financial security. Even after court victory, that dream seems shattered.

The goalkeeper was to lose £70,000 when their safari company Mondoro collapsed in 1994, but the personal fall-out was even more spectacular. Feeling hurt, and seeking money and "revenge", Mr Vincent went to the *Sun* newspaper with a remarkable story: that the Liverpool and Southampton

'Grobbelaar received treachery and lies in return for giving Vincent his time, money and friendship'

goalkeeper, one of the biggest names in English soccer, had been trying to fix the result of Premier League games for a Far East gambling syndicate.

The newspaper used Mr Vincent to set up a "sting", in a series of interviews with his old friend in October 1994 which were secretly videotaped. It was these tapes which formed the charge that Grobbelaar took £2,000 from Mr Vincent as a bribe to influence football games for another - invented - syndicate, and on which he was formally cleared yesterday.

The footballer claimed later that he had been stringing Mr Vincent along, suspecting that his former friend may be trying to set him up.

The re-trial jury also spotted that a crucial line from the video tape had been missed by both prosecution and defence and did not appear in the transcript: that when Grobbelaar picked up the £2,000 offered by the non-existent syndicate it was only after Mr Vincent, referring to the cash, said to him, "I don't have a jacket, you carry this."

The jury was unable to reach a verdict on the charge against Grobbelaar and the judge entered a verdict of not guilty.

Mr Vincent, the key prosecution witness, was attacked by the defence.

Rodney Klevan QC, Grobbelaar's counsel, said the player had given Mr Vincent his time, his money and his friendship. "In return he has received treachery and, more importantly, he has received lies," he said.

The defence highlighted Grobbelaar's reputation, from boy soldier with the Rhodesian army to the man who comforted the families of victims after the Hillsborough tragedy.

His remarkable, and sometimes lighthearted approach to football, came from his expe-

riences on national service. "Losing a game is not a tragedy after experiencing border raids and having to eat beetles because you are out of rations."

A string of impressive expert witnesses, including 1966 World Cup heroes Gordon Banks, former Arsenal goalkeeper and television pundit goalkeeper Bob Wilson, and the goalkeeper's manager at Southampton Alan Ball, testified to Grobbelaar's performances.

Grobbelaar yesterday movingly thanked the fans who had stood by him.

Their attitude was summed up by a front page headline in a Liverpool newspaper when the allegations were first made. It ran: "We stand by our man".

Les Cross Channel Bargains of '97

Short Break

from **£89** return

Club Break

from **£129** return

Economy Return

from **£149**

Duty Free

lowest prices guaranteed.

le Shuttle

Folkestone ← Calais

For reservations call

0990 35 35 35

or your travel agent.

Le Shuttle guarantees the lowest Duty Free prices across the Channel. If you find the identical Duty Free product for sale cheaper from another cross-Channel operator within twenty-one days from the date you purchased it from Le Shuttle we'll refund the difference. Excludes promotional prices or prices that are conditional upon making other purchases. All claims must be made within twenty-eight days of purchase from Le Shuttle. Prices quoted include car and all passengers and are valid between 10pm and 6am.

IN TOMORROW'S FIVE-SECTION INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



Pretty woman
The renaissance of Julia Roberts

Early starter
Meet Reuben Singh, a multi-millionaire at 20

After A-levels
How to plan a great gap year experience

Elvis and me
One girl's memories of the King

Madrid break
From just £158 with our special reader offer

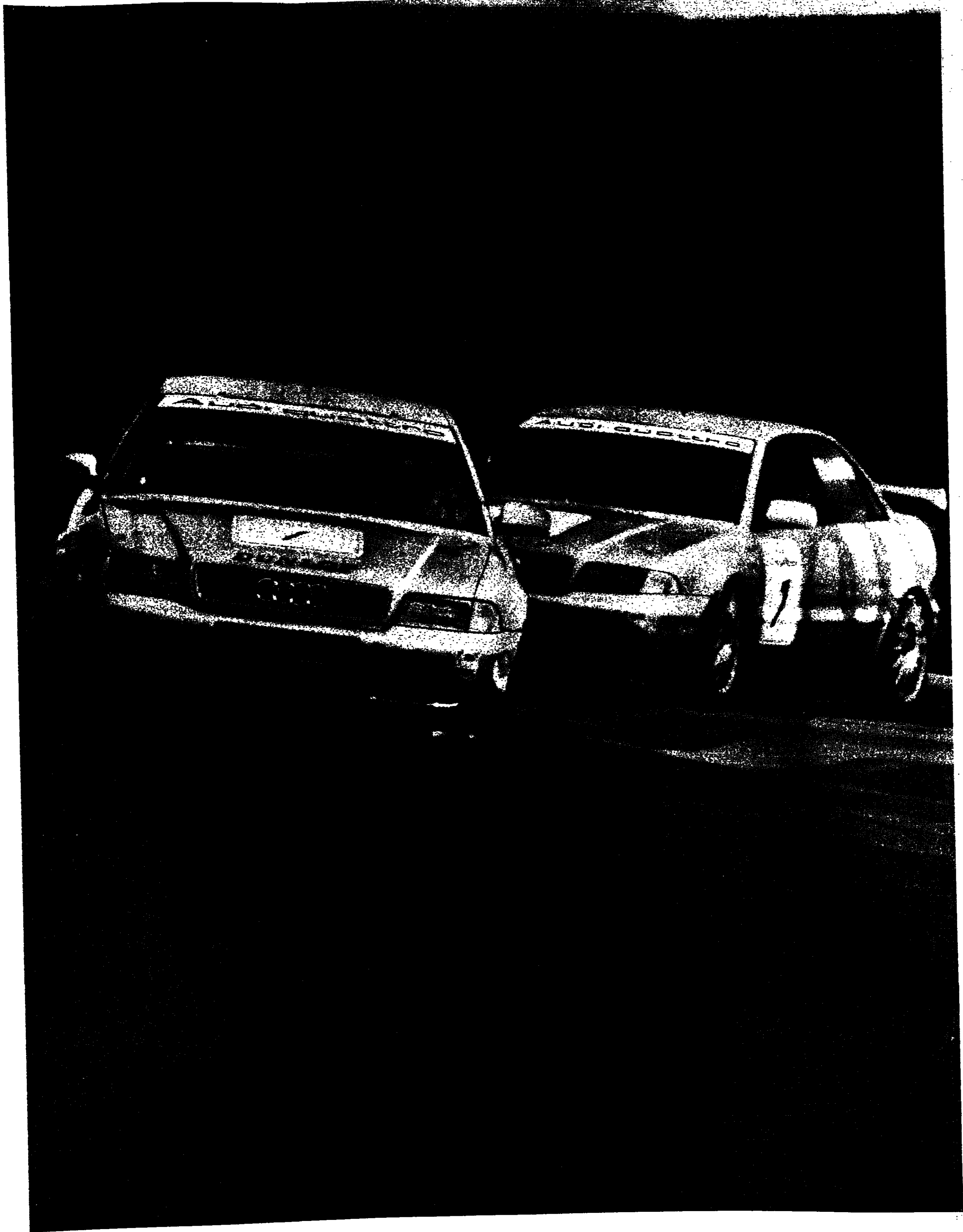
Flying squad
Behind the scenes at air traffic control

Manhunting
If I'm so fabulous, then how come I'm still single?

Sunday Preview
Full seven-day terrestrial and satellite TV listings

The Big Match
All the Ashes action plus the Premiership kick-off

Fantasy Football
Sign up for a chance to win a trip to the World Cup



Déjà vu.

On the tight, twisting Knockhill circuit last weekend, it was business as usual for Audi, the reigning British Touring Car Champions. The two Audi A4 quattros finished first and second in both races, as well as the qualifying rounds. All this despite a 65kg weight penalty. Haven't we been here before?

Audi 
Vorsprung durch Technik

صكنا من الامم

Welcum

British is no
official
partner



0128

Translation:
Cornish is now
an official
language

The Cornish Language
Board examinations fall into the medieval camp. The secretary of the board, Wella Brown, said: "Cornish died at the end of the 18th century, so you have to decide whether to revive the corpse of a man in his prime or of somebody in the latter stages of life. The bulk of the revivalists decide the best option

Jan Gendall, folklorist and member of the language council, admits: "The numbers of people who could sit down and chat in Cornish on any subject from space travel to knights in shining armour are very few. The number who would shout for help in Cornish if they were drowning are even fewer."



In 15 years of research Mr Gendall has gathered 10,000 entries, starting from 1504, the date of the last great medieval Cornish epic. He believes they show that late or modern Cornish was the

"Most of the work that has been done by Cornish scholars has focused on the medieval period. But this shows us that Cornish was a diverse and vibrant language in the late period."

What is more, Cornish still


Cornish versions of names—Tamsin, Cornish for Thomasina. **Jennifer**, Cornish for Guinivere. **Catteme**, Cornish for Kate. **Lowena**, increasingly popular Cornish version of Joy.

With the resurgence of interest in Cornish nationalism, the language is also provoking much interest. "Cornish people are losing houses, losing dialect, losing jobs," he said. "But there is nothing like the knowledge


"real" Cornish people left.
 □ *Practical Dictionary of Modern Cornish*. Available from selected bookshops, and from Teere ha Tavaz, Treggrill Vean, Menheniot, Liskeard, Cornwall PL14 3PL, for £11.60 inc.

TEACHER'S WHISKY

FREE
20cl BOTTLE
OF TEACHER'S
WORTH £4.29
WITH EVERY
70cl BOTTLE



Wine Rack

THRESHER  BOTTOMS-UP

Selected stores now open until 10.30pm.
Offer runs from 7.89 to 13.89 inclusive.
 Prices correct at time of going to press. 70cl bottle price £11.49. Available to over 18's only. Offer subject to availability.
 No further discounts apply including shareholder's discount.

Currys

SALE

SAVE UP TO £100 ON A RANGE OF CAMCORDERS

LOWEST PRICES EVER

ON A HUGE RANGE OF TOP BRAND PRODUCTS*

SONY

HI-8 CAMCORDERS

Makes near professional quality recordings. Fantastic quality sound. Ultra-sharp close picture definition.

SONY Hi-8 Camcorder with 36x Digital Zoom. 6 auto-exposure modes. Steady shot image stabiliser. Model TRV20. Was £799.99. 12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION* SAVE £100 WHICH CAMERA? BEST BUY

SALE PRICE
£699.99



HALF PRICE
ACCESSORY KIT AVAILABLE WITH ALL SONY HI-8 CAMCORDERS

SONY Hi-8 Camcorder with 12x Power Zoom. Model TRV10. Was £499.99. In-store Price £399.99. 12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION* SAVE £100 WHICH CAMERA? BEST BUY

SONY Hi-8 Camcorder with 36x Digital Zoom. Model TRV20. Was £799.99. In-store Price £599.99. 12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION* SAVE £100 WHICH CAMERA? BEST BUY

SONY Hi-8 Camcorder with 2.7" Foldout Colour LCD Screen and Speaker. Model TRV40. 12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION* SAVE £100 WHICH CAMERA? BEST BUY

SONY Hi-8 Camcorder with 12x Power Zoom. Model TRV10. Was £499.99. In-store Price £399.99. 12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION* SAVE £100 WHICH CAMERA? BEST BUY

SONY Hi-8 Camcorder with 36x Digital Zoom. Model TRV20. Was £799.99. In-store Price £599.99. 12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION* SAVE £100 WHICH CAMERA? BEST BUY

SONY Hi-8 Camcorder with 2.7" Foldout Colour LCD Screen and Speaker. Model TRV40. 12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION* SAVE £100 WHICH CAMERA? BEST BUY

SAMSUNG

SAMSUNG Hi-8 Camcorder with 16x Power Zoom. 6 auto-exposure modes. Steady shot image stabiliser. Model PV70. Was £399.99. In-store Price £299.99. 6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION* SAVE £100 WHICH CAMERA? BEST BUY

LOWEST PRICE EVER
£349.99



SAMSUNG Hi-8 Camcorder with 16x Power Zoom. 6 auto-exposure modes. Steady shot image stabiliser. Model PV70. Was £399.99. In-store Price £299.99. 6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION* SAVE £100 WHICH CAMERA? BEST BUY

SAMSUNG Hi-8 Camcorder with 16x Power Zoom. 6 auto-exposure modes. Steady shot image stabiliser. Model PV70. Was £399.99. In-store Price £299.99. 6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION* SAVE £100 WHICH CAMERA? BEST BUY

SAMSUNG Hi-8 Camcorder with 16x Power Zoom. 6 auto-exposure modes. Steady shot image stabiliser. Model PV70. Was £399.99. In-store Price £299.99. 6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION* SAVE £100 WHICH CAMERA? BEST BUY

Panasonic

PANASONIC Hi-8 Camcorder with 14x Power Zoom. 6 auto-exposure modes. Steady shot image stabiliser. Model NVR10. Was £499.99. In-store Price £399.99. 6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION* SAVE £100 WHICH CAMERA? BEST BUY

FREE
HOLDALL WITH THIS CAMCORDER



PANASONIC Hi-8 Camcorder with 14x Power Zoom. 6 auto-exposure modes. Steady shot image stabiliser. Model NVR10. Was £499.99. In-store Price £399.99. 6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION* SAVE £100 WHICH CAMERA? BEST BUY

PANASONIC Hi-8 Camcorder with 14x Power Zoom. 6 auto-exposure modes. Steady shot image stabiliser. Model NVR10. Was £499.99. In-store Price £399.99. 6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION* SAVE £100 WHICH CAMERA? BEST BUY

PANASONIC Hi-8 Camcorder with 14x Power Zoom. 6 auto-exposure modes. Steady shot image stabiliser. Model NVR10. Was £499.99. In-store Price £399.99. 6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION* SAVE £100 WHICH CAMERA? BEST BUY

Only Currys bring you all this...

NEW
NEXT DAY DELIVERY & INSTALLATION 7 DAYS A WEEK
We offer next day delivery of all our products. We also offer installation services for a wide range of products. For more details, call 0181-200 0200.

LOWEST PRICES ON THE SPOT
We have the lowest prices on the spot. We will never be beaten.

MASTERCARD
Up to 5 years expert service support when you buy a Mastercard Coverplan Service Agreement. 4% PLUS INTEREST FREE OPTION WHEN PURCHASED WITH ANY PRODUCT OVER £100. Ask in-store for details.

EXCLUSIVE MODELS & OFFERS
For exceptional value, exclusive to DSG Retail Ltd.

INSTANT CREDIT
With Currys Premier Advantage Account you can take advantage of any credit offer in-store. Ask for details.

INDEPENDENT REVIEWS
CURRYS DIRECT For direct, doorstep delivery. Freephone 0500 304364 or fax 01442 681145 (Mon-Sat 9am-5pm Sun). Delivery charges from £3.25. Part of DSG Retail Ltd.

AWARD WINNING IN-STORE REPAIR SHOP
Repairs 7 days a week. Same day wherever possible.

PCRAM UPGRADES
Available in-store.

PC HOTLINE 7 DAYS A WEEK
081 516116. Calls cost 50p per minute.

SAME DAY SERVICE
For most large items if you phone before 10am Monday to Friday and live within 10 miles of a Currys store.

COMBINED DELIVERY AND INSTALLATION
On all free-standing gas and electric cookers by CORGI registered engineers (includes Northern Ireland and selected Scottish stores).

Currys
BRITAIN'S BIGGEST ELECTRICAL STORES

APR 29.5%
For low rates £1000 and over (minimum deposit is 10%). Subject to credit checks and a 10% deposit. Repayment by Direct Debit. Repayment period 12 months. Total amount payable £249.45.

APR 29.5%
Pay a 20% deposit then nothing for the deferred period indicated with the product. You can then repay the loan in full, interest free, or by monthly instalments when interest will be charged at an APR of 29.5% from the date of the agreement. Example based on £1200. Either pay the loan Cash Price £399.99, 20% deposit £240.00. Either pay the loan amount of £319.99 within 12 months or 36 monthly payments by direct debit of £16.74. Total amount payable £282.64.

WATCH OUT FOR OUR VOUCHER SPECIALS!
Look out for the special voucher (orange or yellow) products throughout the advertisement. Simply take this voucher to any Currys store to claim your discount. One voucher only per purchase. Some voucher offers are an alternative to existing trade-in offers. Not for use with other offers. (Some offers may be subject to change. See Currys Office for details. HURRY! These voucher prices valid only until Thursday 16th August 1995.

150 من الاصل

It jumps, it moves, it makes you laugh and cry...but is it art?

David Lister
Arts News Editor

The Simpsons, television's cult cartoon comedy series, is now art, a notion that might drive the anarchic, iconoclastic family to hysterics.

Original drawings from the series will feature in their own exhibition, The Simpsons Animation Art Exhibition, at the Animation Art Gallery in Great Castle Street, London, from next weekend.

The exhibition will be opened by Yeardley Smith, the actress who is the voice of Lisa Simpson. The drawing themselves are likely to fetch up to £500 each. In moving from the anima-

tion studios to the art market, The Simpsons are part of a growing realisation among galleries of the desirability among collectors for original examples of screen animation. The most common reasons have been nostalgia and interest in cinema and television history, which is why early Disney drawings still fetch the premium prices.

But latterly much more recent animation is appearing in galleries and at auction houses. The Simpsons is only six years old. And the successes British animation from Cosgrove Hall studios are also attracting attention.

Russell Singler of the Animation Art Gallery says: "Ani-

mation art is highly collectible. We specialise in Disney, Warner Brothers and Hanna Barbera, but many of the smaller studios have also produced collectible animation.

"The range goes from £20 to several thousand pounds. The most expensive item we have is

a six-dwarf set up from the original 1937 drawings for Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. That is priced at £5,600."

Alongside Disney in Mr Singler's gallery are Batman and Spiderman animation art, The Flintstones from the Eighties (£400), as opposed to the origi-

nal Flintstone drawings from the Sixties which are very rare and would fetch £1,800.

Key characters from our childhoods inspire higher prices. An original storyboard drawing of Cruella De Vil from Disney's 101 Dalmatians is valued at £2,500. And at

an auction in the United States the biggest rarities, drawings from early black-and-white 1930s short films starring Mickey Mouse, have commanded a \$1m price.

Mr Singler said: "Everyone has their favourite cartoon character and we can find them

an original from that series." Finding the original cels - a single scene which will make up only a fraction of a second of the version seen on film - can be difficult. "Most of the older anima-

tion cels were just thrown away," says Mr Singler. "They were never seen as anything of

value but today it's quite different. This is North American heritage."

The Simpsons is art, adds Mr Singler, "because art is something you buy because you enjoy looking at it. It means something to you, inspires emotions and you enjoy it".



Moving pictures: Russell Singler of the Animation Art Gallery with a cel from Disney's 1937 film Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

Lawrence inquiry to be held in public

Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

The inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence will be held in public in a building close to where the black teenager was stabbed to death, it was announced yesterday.

An appeal will be made for people to come forward with evidence. The inquiry, as well as examining the circumstances surrounding the killing, will also have wide-ranging implications for how the police and courts deal with racially motivated

crime. Sir William Mac-pherson of Cluny, the judge heading the inquiry, said yesterday that he intended proceedings to be "as open as possible".

He said public hearings would be held later this year and an appeal would be made for people to come forward. The judge, formerly a High Court judge of the Queen's Bench, was appointed by the Home Secretary Jack Straw to lead the inquiry last week. The announcement followed a meeting between Mr Straw and the Lawrence family.

The inquiry will be given powers last used in Lord Scar-

'An appeal will be made for people to provide evidence'

man's 1981 inquiry into the Brixton riots. It will examine the events surrounding the stabbing of the 18-year-old student at a bus stop in Eltham, south-east London, in 1993.

Sir William met his fellow inquiry members for the first time at the Home Office in London, yesterday. He shook the hand of Tim Cook, the former Deputy Chief Constable of West Yorkshire Police, the Rt Rev John Sennarum, Bishop of Stepney, and Dr Richard Stone, chairman of the Jewish Council for Racial Equality.

Sir William said in a statement: "We will be holding public hearings later this year and we would like them to take place in Greenwich. A public appeal will be made for people to come forward with evidence. Following that appeal, decisions will be made about who will be called before the inquiry."

The Police Complaints Authority is currently investigating complaints made by the Lawrence family about the Metropolitan Police's handling of the case. They are expected to complete their findings by October. Fuller details of their report will be published - this has only happened on four previous occasions - although witness statements will be kept secret.

Sir William's inquiry will only begin after the authority's report has been completed. The inquiry has been given power to summon any person or obtain any documents. Refusal to testify would be contempt of court and could lead to imprisonment.

Police move to stop Nazi rock concert

Ian Burrell

A major police operation is taking place to prevent hundreds of Nazi skinheads from all over Europe staging a rally and rock concert in South Wales today.

After a raid on a house in Cardiff on Thursday, police made four arrests and seized weapons and 30 boxes of literature.

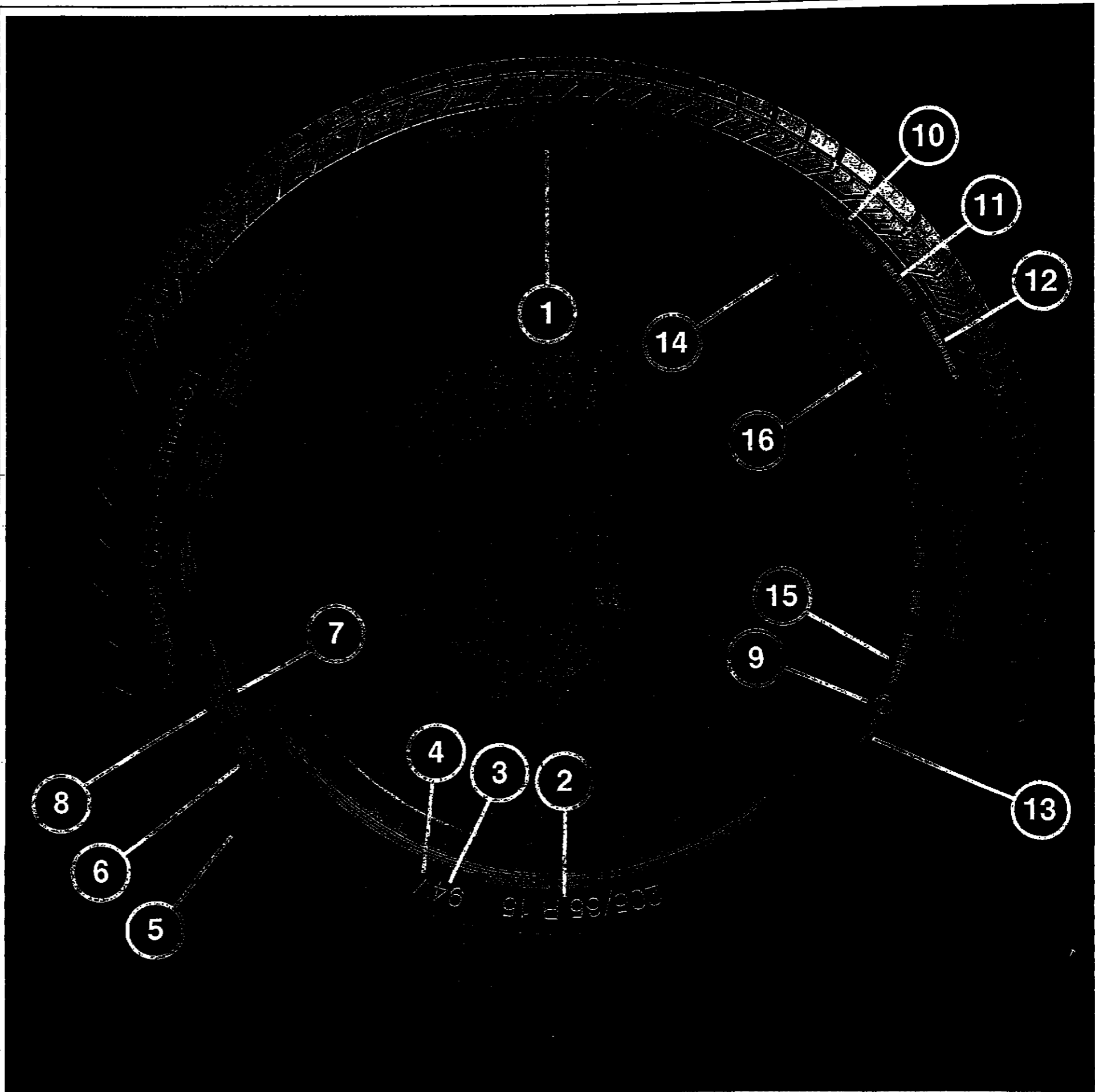
Billy Bartlett, 29, from Cardiff, was charged with public order offences and released on bail. His girlfriend and two other men, both Americans, were released without charge.

Blood and Honour, the Nazi skinhead group which is behind the event, is hoping to attract up to 1,000 supporters, with around 150 skinheads travelling from France, Germany and Belgium. But the police initiative was to-

day threatening to create a massive loss-of-face for the organisers who are believed to have been searching for last minute alternative venues in the west of England.

Plans for the so-called "Aryan Music Fest" have alarmed politicians including the South Wales MEP, Glens Kinnock, and the Plaid Cymru president, Dafydd Wigley MP, who have called for a ban. And the Anti-Nazi League has called on supporters to rally in Cardiff and Bridgend.

The British Nazi skins, who are highly regarded by their peers in other countries, face humiliation over the climb-down. Similar events are staged regularly in Germany, with 1,000 people attending and British skinhead bands invited to play as headline acts.



Continental

TYRES - ENGINEERED IN GERMANY

Drenched in Devon, but there's always a sunny side

Thousands were heading to the coast yesterday to take advantage of the hottest weekend the year so far while certain parts of the country were still mopping up from some of the worst storms in decades.

With temperatures in central and southern England set to reach 30C, the sudden good weather follows a week in which parts of Britain have suffered torrential rain, flooding hundreds of properties and closing scores of roads.

South Wales and the South-west were the most badly affected parts of the country. In east Devon, where three inches of rain fell in just 45 minutes on Thursday night, the worst flash floods for decades forced the evacuation of nearly a thousand holiday-makers from a campsite near Honiton.

In the village of Ottery St Mary, the water reached three feet in places. The town's fire station was flooded, and fire-fighters' cars had to be rescued. Martin Weiler, of the Environment Agency, described the severe thunderstorm as "very, very unusual".

By yesterday morning, however, the heavy rain was

receding and mopping-up operations could begin to clear roads blocked by the deluge.

The road-rescue organisations are advising motorists that most roads in the area are passable with care.

"The A30, the main route in and out of the West Country, has been reopened, but some minor roads remain under water," said an RAC spokeswoman.

But the recent rain is still likely to add to problems on the roads as thousands of people head for beaches in Devon and Cornwall.

Meanwhile, the bookmakers William Hill have cut the odds on the temperature reaching 100F (37.8C) this year from 50-1 to 33-1.

Grabham Sharpe, Hill's spokesman, said: "On the hottest day of the year so far, we have taken a string of bets, and it could cost us a payout of up to £250,000 if 100F is reached for the first time."

The sunny weather is expected to break at the beginning of next week giving a gloomy outlook. Thundery showers will hit most parts of the country.



Wash out: A family carrying their belongings after heavy rain flooded their campsite at Ottery St Mary, Devon

Photograph: Guy Newman/Amex

Dixons DEAL97

BRITAIN'S BIGGEST HIGH STREET MOBILE PHONE RETAILER

Bigger and Better than Ever!

EVERYTHING YOU NEED
All the leading brands of mobiles, plus great accessories.

LATEST TECHNOLOGY
If it's new, we've got it. Come in and see it now.

ADVICE YOU CAN TRUST
Straightforward help with phones and tariff options.

QUALITY GUARANTEED
All products are backed by Mastercare, Britain's biggest service and repair network.

PRICE - WE CAN'T BE BEATEN
Every week we check the prices of hundreds of products in the national press to make sure that Dixons Price Check prices can't be beaten.

PRICE CHECK

NEW FREE CONNECTION WITH one 2 one

WHEN YOU BUY A SECOND PHONE

NEW PARTNERS PLAN

- **BUY ANY TWO One 2 One PHONES**
- **SAVE £5 ON EACH PHONE**
- **FREE CONNECTION WORTH £35 ON SECOND PHONE**
- **ONE BILL SIMPLE MONTHLY BILL FOR BOTH PHONES**
- **MONTHLY LINE RENTAL FOR £7.50 ON EACH PHONE**

MOTOROLA FLARE+ MOBILE PHONE

- Up to 180 minutes talktime/45 hours standby time.
- 99 name and number memory.
- Caller identification.
- Backlit keypad and display.

TWO PHONES PARTNERS PRICE

£9.98*

PRICE CHECKED

NOKIA 1620

DIGITAL MOBILE PHONE

- Up to 210 minutes talktime/100 hours standby time.
- 99 name and number memory.
- Backlit keypad and display.
- Keypad lock.

Partners Price

£14.99*

PRICE CHECKED

NOKIA 2146

MOBILE PHONE

- Up to 90 minutes talktime/24 hours standby time.
- 125 name and number memory.
- Recharges in only 60 minutes.
- Fax and data compatible.

Partners Price

£19.99*

PRICE CHECKED

NOKIA 8146

DIGITAL MOBILE PHONE

- Up to 90 minutes talktime/70 hours standby time.
- 224 name and number memory.
- Fax and data compatible.
- Caller identification.
- Unique slide-down cover to start and end calls.

Partners Price

£94.99*

PRICE CHECKED

NEW

PRICE CHECK

"If you find the same product cheaper locally, we'll be pleased to refund the difference. Just notify us within 7 days of purchase. The product must be new, complete and available for immediate delivery. Mail order prices excluded."

*PLUS CONNECTION £35 on the first phone. When you connect to One 2 One. Subject to status. Ask in-store for our range of tariffs, prices and terms.

one 2 one FREE VOICEMAIL ON ALL SERVICES

- 80% of Great Britain's population now covered.
- Free Voicemail - it's free to pick up your messages.
- From only £7.50 per month.
- Billing by the second.
- Digital call security.
- Low off-peak call rates.
- Only 10p inc. VAT per minute.

Dixons

There's a Great Deal going on

Court comes to the aid of Saudi nurses

Ian Burrell

Two British nurses accused of murder in Saudi Arabia heard yesterday that their chances of avoiding the death penalty had increased after an Australian court ruling.

The brother of murdered Australian nurse Yvonne Gilford has called for her British former colleagues, Deborah Parry and Lucille McLauchlan, to be executed if they are convicted of the killing.

But there is intense dispute over whether Frank Gilford has the legal right to represent his family's wishes on the possible beheading of the accused.

Yesterday the South Australian State Supreme Court ordered him not to make further calls for the death penalty until his mother's mental state has been assessed.

Judge Len King said there were serious questions about the mental competency of Muriel Gilford, and ordered her son not to claim she backed the potential death penalty for her daughter's killers.

Under Saudi law, a call for the death penalty by a victim's family must be unanimous.

Michael Dark, representing Ms Parry, 41, and Ms McLauchlan, 31, welcomed the decision of the Adelaide court and said it is now up to the Saudi courts to decide what happens next.

"We were given until Sunday to produce evidence showing that Mrs Gilford is not mentally competent," he said.

"We asked Frank Gilford's lawyers if they would let us have any evidence to confirm that she is in a nursing home but they re-



Accused: The nurses Deborah Parry (left) and Lucille McLauchlan could be beheaded if found guilty of murder

'We didn't have much choice, but to ask the Australians to help us'

fused," he said. "We didn't have much choice but to ask the courts in Australia to help us, which they have done."

The lawyer said that Mr Gilford's mother, who is believed to suffer from Alzheimer's Disease, is not mentally competent to agree with her son's call for execution.

Speculating on what might happen when Saudi proceedings resume tomorrow at the sharia court, Mr Dark said: "The judge will either say there can be no unanimous decision made because Mrs Gilford is not competent."

"Or it might be decided that

some sort of guardian should be appointed to make the decision on her behalf."

Michael Boylan, representing Frank and Muriel Gilford, said the Australian proceedings were an attempt to interfere in the trial and were an abuse of legal process.

He said Frank Gilford's comments had been made through his lawyers in Saudi Arabia and were outside the jurisdiction of the Australian court.

It is possible, though unlikely, that the case will finish this weekend.

No Westerner has been executed in Saudi Arabia although dozens of foreigners, mostly Asians convicted of drug smuggling, are executed in the kingdom every year.

The dead nurse's body was found in December in her room at the King Fahd Military Medical Complex, where the three worked.

Forensic reports showed that the victim had been stabbed 13 times, beaten and suffocated.

Foreign dissidents face jail in crackdown on terrorism

Jason Bennetto Crime Correspondent

Foreign extremists in Britain plotting to carry out terrorism abroad could be jailed under proposals being considered by ministers.

The Home Office confirmed yesterday that it was at an early stage of examining whether to introduce new legislation to outlaw dissidents conspiring to commit crimes in other countries.

The move follows growing concern that London is being used as a base by extremists to plot or finance terrorist attacks.

fax machine from Britain for the violent overthrow of the Saudi royal family.

Israel has also complained to Britain that radical Arab groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad are using London as a conduit for funds.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, said in a letter to the Board of Jewish Deputies that Labour was "carefully considering the question of introducing legislation that would give the courts jurisdiction over acts of conspiracy performed in this country in respect of criminal acts abroad".

A private member's Bill by the Tory MP Nigel Waterson during the last Parliament had a similar objective but failed because there was no quorum

in the Commons. This led to a slanging match between the parties, each blaming the other for the break down.

Mr Masari successfully fought an attempt last year by Michael Howard, the then Tory Home Secretary, to have him deported to the Caribbean island of Dominica.

Mr Howard was forced to make a U-turn after a High Court ruling that he had circumvented the UN Convention on Refugees for "diplomatic and trade reasons". His presence in Britain was an embarrassment for the Tory Government. It had been keen to maintain friendly relations with the Saudis in order to preserve £20bn of arms sales and protect jobs.

سكرا من الامم

The world hates the French ... and they don't like each other

PARIS DAYS

"Great Debate in the British Press," said the headline in *Le Figaro*. "Are the French Detestable?"

The *Daily Mail* sent a reporter to find out. He discovered the French were appalling. Was there any chance that the *Mail* might have reached the opposite conclusion?

The great debate has been raging for three weeks (or, if you insist, for over 900 years). It started with a survey of tourists by the Paris Chamber of Commerce, which concluded that many foreign visitors, and not just the British, regarded France as a wonderful country, scarred by the fact that it was inhabited by the French.

The British found the natives arrogant, rude and disorganised; the Germans thought they were arrogant, rude and unwashed. And so on.

This was cheered in the British tabloid press as an own goal: that is, the French are so insufferable that they are forced to admit it themselves. In truth, the report pointed to something else: the French, or some of the French, are aware they climb (one way or another) up the nasal cavities of foreign visitors and they are trying to do something about it.

In my experience, the French, especially younger generations of French people, are not quite so implacably and splendidly rude to foreigners as they used to be.

The second salvo of cross-Chanel bile was fired by the small Cotswolds town of Stow-in-the-Wold, which might now, perhaps, consider changing its name to Stuck-in-the-Mud. Its parish council rejected a plan to twin with a French town, citing grievances ranging from the mad cow dispute to the Hundred Years War.

Twinning, if it has any purpose at all, is intended to overcome doty and vacuous prejudices of this kind. Stow preferred to cherish its prejudices.

The French were rather wounded by this rejection. They knew the British liked to make fun of them but did not suspect such outright hostility existed. Some of the post-Stow commentary in French press was also over the top; it failed to point out that scores of British towns and villages are contentedly twinned with similar places in France and, in some cases, dissimilar places.

What, for instance, does Bolton have in common with Le Mans? And yet the towns have been happily twinned for more

than 20 years. (I did try to check how many French towns and villages are twinned with British ones; but this is August. The only person at the French twinning association, *Cités Unies*, who knew how to work the computer was away on holiday.)

Julian Barnes, the francophile British novelist, attempted this week to place the disorganised-detestable-French debate in perspective. In an open letter to the people of France, published in *Le Figaro*, he told them, in effect: yes, you are awful but that's what makes you French and you mustn't change. We would hate that even more.

He summed up: "Your historic role in Europe, especially for the British, is to embody Otherness... Don't wash just to please the Germans. Don't organise yourselves better just to please the British. Do you see that pavement? Let your dog do its business on it without hesitation. It's your patriotic duty."

There is a rich paradox here. France is already the most visited country in the world. The decline of the franc means France is likely to break all records for receiving foreigners this year: well over 60 million, including 10 million from Britain.

Not only do many of these visitors say they dislike the French; many of the French say they dislike the visitors. As the satirical newspaper *Le Canard Enchaîné* commented, turning the conclusion of the Parisian visitor survey on its head: "The French like tourism but not tourists."

They are hardly alone in this. But, as I tried to explain once before (only to be accused of French-bashing), there is a particular difficulty for the French in getting on with foreigners because they don't read-

'Yes, you are awful but that's what makes you French ... don't wash to please the Germans or get organised to please the British'

Julian Barnes



Essence of Frenchness: How accurate is the image of a nation implacably and splendidly rude to foreigners? There are signs of change, especially among the younger generations. Photograph: UPP

ily, on a casual basis, get on with one another. Chumminess is not a French talent.

More precisely, France operates on the basis of familiarity and established groups of relatives, friends and clients. If you are a stranger, whether foreign or otherwise, you should expect the minimum service and maximum charge. Once you become an established member of a community, how-

ever informal, everything changes.

I go to the same café every morning to read the French newspapers. Madame, the patronne, is fearfully rude to foreign tourists who show the slightest hesitation in giving their order. But she brings my usual coffee and croissant with a smile. This week, with half of Paris closed down, she was unable to secure croissants from her usual suppliers.

On Monday, she apologised, almost tearfully. I could have no croissant with my coffee. By Tuesday, she had located an alternative source. There were no croissants displayed on the counter. They were too precious to offer to the public. But she came to me furtively and triumphantly with a croissant on a small white plate and said: "Look, I managed to get you one..."

I sat staring out at the deserted boulevard, chomping proudly what might have been - Maxon Brando eat your heart out - The Last Croissant in Paris.

John Lichfield



Miracle-worker pulls off deal among feuding Bosnians

Marcus Tanner

The Europeans wheedle and threaten to little or no effect. United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright harangues Presidents Tudjman and Milosevic in public - and in vain. But when Richard Holbrooke steps back onto the stage the feuding leaders of former Yugoslavia suddenly, almost miraculously, agree to a host of issues that have held up all progress on the Bosnian peace deal for months and even threatened to plunge the country back into armed conflict.

Yesterday Mr Holbrooke, the US envoy who pulled off the peace deal for Bosnia at Dayton, Ohio, in December 1995, pulled off another deal on diplomatic posts, the telephone system and passports - all of which had appeared totally insoluble until he arrived back in former Yugoslavia two days ago on another whirlwind diplomatic mission at the request of President Bill Clinton.

Under the package, Bosnia's ambassador to the United Nations will be a Muslim, Wash-

ington will go to a Serb and Tokyo to a Bosnian Croat. The other 30-odd diplomatic postings will be distributed equally between the three communities.

Leaders of the Muslim-Croat federation and the self-governing Bosnian Serb entity also agreed to set up a commission on the Bosnian telephone network - the business of a single country code having bedevilled ties be-

tween the two Bosnian entities and assumed enormous, sinister, significance for the Serbs.

Several disputes evaded solution even by Mr Holbrooke. Among them are Bosnia's new currency and final responsibility for issuing passports and resolving questions of citizenship. Both are pressing issues for the Bosnian Serbs, as they will affect their independence from the Sarajevo government. The Serbs want to unite their currency with Belgrade, not Sarajevo. They also want to give several hundred thousand Serb refugees from Croatia full citizenship, which Sarajevo opposes.

But the US envoy was satisfied. "These are steps forward and pretty solid ones," he said after 10 hours of meetings.

The US and the European Union states suspended recognition of Bosnia's present, Muslim-dominated ambassadorial corps after an internationally imposed deadline for the distribution of posts among Muslims Serbs and Croats ran out on 1 August. German officials yesterday said they would now

recommend their partners to resume diplomatic contact with Sarajevo immediately as a result of the talks.

Mr Holbrooke yesterday headed for the northern town of Banja Luka to show his support for the so-called "moderate" Bosnian Serb President, Biljana Plavsic, in her power struggle with the former Bosnian Serb president and indicted war criminal Radovan Karadzic.

After his triumph at Dayton in 1995, which ended Bosnia's bloody three-and-a-half-year civil war, Mr Holbrooke left the diplomatic field for private business. Since then, Bosnia's peace process has all but collapsed and the more ebullient tactics of his successors in mediation have only persuaded the Bosnian factions that they can get away with not fulfilling any of the Dayton provisions. President Clinton's fears that it would not be possible to withdraw 8,000 US peacekeepers next year, therefore, led to the bullish Mr Holbrooke being recalled for this one-off special mission.



Holbrooke: Recalled for special diplomatic mission

significant shorts

Buthelezi party storms out of peace talks with the ANC

South Africa's Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party withdrew from talks to end bitter decade-long turf wars with President Nelson Mandela's African National Congress. The Inkatha chairman, Ben Ngubane, cited the bias shown against his party at Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings this week as the main reason. Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the IFP leader and Home Affairs Minister in Mr Mandela's cabinet, was accused at hearings this week of knowing about killings carried out by IFP-aligned hit-squads. Reuters - Durban

Bomb damages Swedish stadium

A bomb destroyed part of a sports stadium in Stockholm but no one was hurt. The device, which exploded in the press stand, spread debris and bricks into a nearby street. There was no warning of the explosion, which followed a number of attacks on sports arenas. Swedish media have linked them to opponents of Stockholm's bid for the 2004 Summer Olympics. "I'm very sorry to hear about it," the International Olympic Committee president, Juan Antonio Samaranch, said. AP - Stockholm

Rebel bishop denounces Pope's visit

The rebel French bishop Jacques Gaillot accused the Pope of encouraging militant anti-abortion groups by honouring one of their heroes during a visit to France this month. Mgr Gaillot, ousted by the Vatican from his diocese in 1995 because of his views, said a visit to the grave of the Jerome Lejeune would be seen as symbolic support for the militant groups. Reuters - Paris

Suspected spy beaten to death

A man suspected of being a police spy was beaten to death at a Nairobi rally and hundreds of opposition supporters took to the streets to press demands for reform. Some 1,000 activists turned up for the rally to hear speakers demand reforms from President Daniel arap Moi before elections due this year. A man identified as Gilbert Ahanya Simiyu was pronounced dead on arrival at hospital. Reuters - Nairobi

Italy plays down Somalia torture cases

Italy confirmed that soldiers tortured Somalis on a peace-keeping mission but a report said the abuses were not widespread and senior officers were largely blameless. The report was produced by a commission set up after the press printed allegations of rape, murder and brutality by Italian soldiers serving in a US-led humanitarian mission to Somalia from 1992 to 1994. Reuters - Rome

Sob story on Elvis anniversary

The town of Deurne has been rocked by claims that a bust of Elvis Presley has started to weep. As the 20th anniversary of his death approaches, a Dutchman says his statue of the King has begun to shed "tears of joy". "He is crying for all his fans around the world," Toon Nieuwenhuisen said. "He knows how much they love him." Reuters - Deurne

Mean greens wreck kitchen

When an explosion rocked a flat in Vladimir, near Moscow, firefighters and police scaled a ladder to a shattered kitchen window, unsure of what they would find. Rather than a bomb, they discovered only two shattered jars of pickled cucumbers that a housewife had placed on a shelf in the sun. AP - Moscow

Entering Higher Education This Year?

Then don't miss Which Way?
The essential guide for anyone hoping to start higher education this autumn.

Published by UCAS
FREE in The Independent on 13 August



UCAS

in association with THE INDEPENDENT

YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT.

Labour's first 100 days

A stronger, fairer Britain? Ministers give their report on progress so far

Labour marked its first 100 days in office yesterday by announcing that Tony Blair will give an annual statement on the Government's performance.

The Independent asked Cabinet ministers to provide an audit of what they believe they have achieved during the 100 days. We also returned to our panel of voters in Redditch, a group which personified the millions who switched their votes from Tory to Labour.

Issuing a check-list for the first 100 days, John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, said the Government was delivering its side of a contract for a "stronger, fairer, modern Britain" without any sense of complacency.

"We believe we have got off to a flying start.

This is not the end of our crusade, but only the beginning," he said.

Peter Mandelson, minister without portfolio, said it had "not been easy" and hard decisions had been taken.

Ministers across Whitehall have told *The Independent* in their end-of-term reports that they have found the pace of change "breath-taking".

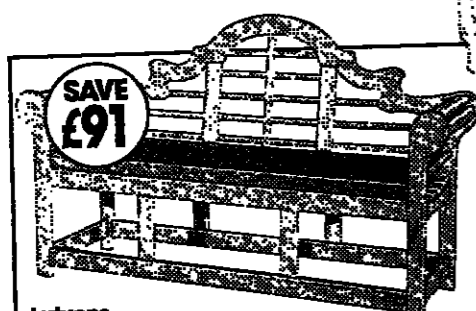
The highlight of the 100 days for many was the decision by the IRA to renew its ceasefire in Northern Ireland. But there have been many more changes, from independence for the Bank of England to next month's referendums in Wales and Scotland on devolution.

Leading article, page 13
Commentators, page 15

"You'll find great end of season savings at B&Q."



DAVID RUPNARIN
Department Manager
B&Q STANMORE



SAVE
£91

Lutyens
Hardwood Bench 5ft (1.52m)
Cushion not included.

WAS £190 £140
£99



SAVE
UP TO
£50

Ascot Hardwood
Bench 4ft (1.22m)
Features a
distinctive
keyhole design.

WAS £125
£99

Also available
5ft (1.52m) (Not shown)

WAS £175
£125



SAVE
£10

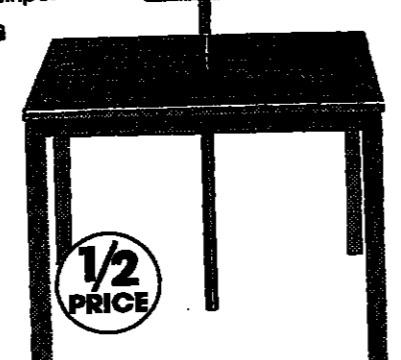
Char-Broil Gas
Barbecue
Heavy duty steel
with chrome
plated grill. Legs
swing up and
double as
carrying handles.

WAS £35
£25



Parasol
2m. Available
in green and
white or
burgundy and
white stripe.

WAS £40
£20 each



SAVE
UP TO
£50

Safari Dining Table
Constructed in
oiled hardwood.
Seats 4 people.

WAS £80
£40



SAVE
£19

Char-Broil GS 50
Gas Barbecue
Cast iron cooking
grate, steel body
and legs, single
stainless steel
burner.

WAS £54
£35

B&Q
YOU CAN DO IT WHEN YOU B&Q IT!

All offers are subject to availability and while stocks last. Please ask in store for details or phone to check before travelling. Offers may vary at B&Q Warehouses and depots. Stores shown are approximate. Leisure furniture and barbecues are flat-packed for self-assembly.

The Blair revolution ... in their own words

JOHN PRESCOTT
Deputy Prime Minister

By integrating environment, transport and regional development into one ministry, and putting the Deputy Prime Minister in charge, we have sent the clearest signal that the environment is at the heart of Government thinking. From ambitious greenhouse gas targets to local council services, this department impinges on the quality of people's lives in ways large and small.

We are boosting social housing, releasing nearly £1bn of capital receipts. And we are not just concerned about the quantity of housing but the quality. Our showpiece Millennium Housing Project at Greenwich will meet the best technical, social and ecological standards. Our Environmental Task Force will match skills to need, from home insulation to nature conservation. We are revitalising local democracy, for example offering Londoners an elected mayor and a strategic assembly.

Plans for Regional Development Agencies have been overwhelmingly endorsed, allowing people to create wealth in their own communities instead of relying on others.

Our integrated transport policy will aim to shift the emphasis to public transport and relieve road congestion.

JACK STRAW
Home Secretary

My priority when I arrived was, and is, to overhaul the system dealing with young offenders. The Crime and Disorder Bill will put many of these reforms into law, including measures to deliver our early pledge for a fast-track for persistent young offenders; ensure they repair the damage they do to victims and the community; and make parents more responsible for the children's behaviour.

The Bill will strengthen communities by giving the police and local authorities new powers to tackle disorder and will create new offences of racially motivated violence and harassment. We have already implemented other key manifesto commitments, including introducing a Bill to ban handguns.

Prisons have taken up much of my time over the last 100 days. Last month, I awarded the Service an extra £43m to cope with overcrowding. My department is presently drawing up legislation to incorporate into UK law the European Convention on Human Rights, and last month I announced that the 1999 European elections would be fought under a PR system.

Since 2 May I have announced: a judicial inquiry into the Stephen Lawrence murder; further support for crime victims; new measures to help ex-prisoners find work; proposals for a new offence of corruption to include bribery of MPs; and plans for a new Race Relations Forum.

ROBIN COOK
Foreign Secretary

In the first fortnight in office I drew up a Mission Statement which set out four key objectives:

- To enhance Britain's security by promoting international stability and fostering strong alliances;
- To make maximum use of our overseas posts to promote trade abroad and create jobs at home;
- To improve our quality of life by working with others to protect the common environment and tackle international crime;
- To secure respect for Britain's commitment to building a strong international community based on democratic values.

In Europe, we announced our intention to sign up to the Social Chapter. During the conclusion of the Inter-Governmental Conference we defended our national interests robustly without indulging in petty obstructionism.

The Government has played a leading role in strengthening the international community's resolve to implement the Dayton Peace Agreement in Bosnia. We have shown our determination to ensure that those indicted for war crimes are brought to justice.

Elsewhere, we have ensured the successful transfer of sovereignty over Hong Kong to China and begun the process of building a new relationship between Russia and an enlarged Nato.

HARRIET HARMAN
Secretary of State for Social Security

Reforming the welfare state to reduce poverty and welfare dependency is a priority of this Government. We believe that work is the best form of welfare for people of working age.

In July, we launched our *New Deal for Lone Parents* - a programme which will provide opportunities to work for half a million lone parents on Income Support with school age children, using £200m from the windfall tax.

Childcare is vital for many women to get into work. The Budget put childcare at the heart of our economic policy and took the first step towards our *National Childcare Strategy*. This will make child care more accessible and affordable.

Disabled people with long-term ill health are also being offered new opportunities. We will develop a



People power: Tony Blair promises an annual performance review

package of measures to help them get into work using up to £200m from the windfall tax.

And we are taking steps to ensure that everyone can enjoy a secure and dignified retirement. VAT on fuel has been cut to 5 per cent and we have announced a wide-ranging review of all aspects of pension provision.

MO MOWLAH
Northern Ireland Secretary

We have begun to make the process of governance in Northern Ireland more open and included more people in helping make key decisions on issues like public spending. We have injected new energy and resources into priorities education, NHS patient care and getting people off benefit and into work.

We have taken decisive steps to improve the prospects for lasting peace. Much had been put in place by the previous government. We added clarity and new impetus.

Setbacks - such as the disturbances after the Drumcree parade - have been followed by advances like the peaceful outcome of the July 12th weekend.

The IRA restored their ceasefire on July 20th. The talks process will be in earnest on 15 September to tackle the core issues at the heart of Northern Ireland's problems. We want to see all parties arguing their case on behalf of the people they represent.



Harman: 'Reducing poverty and welfare dependency is priority'

There is now an unprecedented opportunity to work through the talks for a new settlement that both unionists and nationalists communities in Northern Ireland can support.

CHRIS SMITH
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

We have consigned the backward-looking Department of National Heritage to history and established a new Department for Culture, Media and Sport - signifying a new approach to Britain's 450 billion creative industries. In less than three months, actions have spoken louder than words.

The Creative Industries Task Force: I asked Richard Branson, David Puttnam, Paul Smith, Alan McGee and others to spearhead the Government's support for arts, music, media, tourism and intellectual property.

The National Lottery White Paper sets the scene for a new People's Lottery. £1bn of lottery money will be spent on health and education projects, as well as on NESTA - the nation's fund for talent.

The Millennium: I announced that the

exhibition at Greenwich would go ahead and declared that more than £1bn worth of objects would be taking place.

British Film: I announced a £32.5m lottery cash boost to three new film franchises and new tax breaks for the film industry.

British Sport: £55m has gone to the Football Trust to improve ground safety and we have set up the Football Task Force.

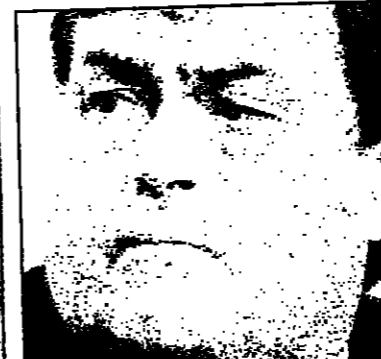
Broadcasting: We removed the outdated Channel Four funding formula to help C4 spend more on diverse programme-making and British film.

MARGARET BECKETT
President of the Board of Trade

As one of my first actions, I wrote to businesses throughout the country, committing myself to working with business. I have delivered on this promise. As a first step, I launched Competitiveness UK. We have established a Taskforce for Competitiveness in Europe; held a Competitiveness Summit; announced a new Advisory Group, plans for a White Paper and, most recently, published proposals for the reform of UK competition law.

Announced a wide-ranging review of utility regulation, pledged to introduce electricity and gas competition.

Awarded £35m support for research and training projects to improve UK competitiveness.



Prescott: 'This is the beginning of our crusade'

Demonstrated our commitment to support of small and medium-sized firms by launching the *Smaller Firms Guidance Project* and proposals to introduce a right for small firms to claim interest on the late payment of debts.

Announced a review of options to give the Post Office greater commercial freedom and introduced legislation to reform management of the radio spectrum.

Freed money for research into astronomy and announced Foresight awards of £10m to help science and business collaborate.

LORD RICHARD
Lord Privy Seal and
Leader of the House of Lords

The political situation in the Lords is almost a mirror image of that in the Commons. With 126 Peers taking the Labour Whip, we have effectively a minority Government.

But, we have succeeded where we needed. The Government has put two Bills meeting key manifesto commitments on to the statute book in

three months - on the devolution referendums and phasing out the Assisted Places scheme.

We look forward to major bills delivering our manifesto commitments on: devolution; crime and justice; standards in schools; the European convention on human rights; reform of the Lottery; a national minimum wage; the London referendum; and regional development.

CLARE SHORT
International Development Secretary

When Tony Blair spoke at the UN Earth Summit in New York in June, the atmosphere was electric. My Department's contribution to the speech was the commitment to halving world poverty by 2015 and to reverse the decline in our aid spend until we reach the 0.7 of GNP UN target.

The OECD's development committee has picked up targets from UN Conferences and called on the world to commit to halving extreme poverty by 2015. This means getting all the children of the world into primary education, basic health care, and clean water for all. I have set myself the task of doing all I can to mobilise the political will.

My White Paper setting out the details of this work will be published shortly. My aim is to leave behind me an international commitment to poverty elimination and the measurement of progress year on year.

ANN TAYLOR
Leader of the House

Management of the Government's heavy legislative programme: modernisation of the House of Commons, and anti-drugs co-ordination have been the key areas of my work since we have been in Government.

In our first 100 days, 18 Government Bills were introduced (compared with 10 in 1979); six Bills received Royal Assent; four White Papers were published; and 15 oral statements made.

I have set about modernising the House of Commons, which has included improving Prime Minister's Question Time and setting up a Select Committee on Modernisation. In the autumn, a *Daily Agenda* will replace the order paper. Some Bills will be carried over to the next session, ensuring vital work is not wasted and there will be better pre-legislative inquiry stage, with consultation within and outside the House.

Drugs Challenge Fund awards have been set up, with £2m going to 79 anti-drugs partnerships. An extra £1m has been generated from business and voluntary sectors. We also plan to advertise for UK Anti Drugs Co-ordinator.

JACK CUNNINGHAM
Agriculture Minister

Our manifesto aims were to make a consumer involvement and protection the recognised cornerstone of MAFF's role, to improve standards of animal welfare; and to get the EU ban on British beef exports lifted as soon as possible.

Within a matter of days, I announced my intention to update the ministry to become more open and accountable including preparing a new mission statement and a change of name.

By mid-June Elliot Morley, Minister for Fisheries and the Countryside, had drawn up new rules to improve the welfare of livestock being transported. A tough approach to hygiene standards in abattoirs was also pursued.

Jeff Rooker, Minister for Food Safety, announced on 21 July that to improve openness and information to consumers the brand names of products tested in food surveys would be given when such results were published.

On 26 June, the McDonald's food group announced that they would return to using British beef, and Burger King did likewise several days later.

On 23 July, the European Union agreed to introduce Europe-wide controls to remove specified materials from beef carcasses - matching existing UK measures.

DR DAVID CLARK
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Office of Public Service

Our manifesto said that our aim would be to rebuild trust between the Government and the people by: cleaning up politics; rolling out public spending waste and inefficiency; and listening to the people and developing services to meet their needs.

In 100 days, we have made a significant start in making the government a genuine servant of the people. We have started by:

- Changing the culture of secrecy in Whitehall by showing our commitment for Freedom of Information legislation.
- Announcing steps to make quangos fully answerable.
- Issuing a tough new Code stating that ministers should be accountable to Parliament.
- Setting up a new Better Regulation Unit to reduce burdens on business, and ensure that regulations are necessary.
- Planning the introduction of a Food Standards Agency.
- Considering a *People's Panel* whereby the public tell us their views on government services.

Tory deserters breathe sigh of relief

Michael Streeter

The land of Mondeo man has given a cautious welcome - a C+ rating - to the first 100 days of New Labour.

Those on *The Independent's* election panel in Redditch, Worcestershire, who switched their votes to Tony Blair see little reason to regret their change; most are quietly impressed with the party's move to power. There is little sense of excitement though, just relief.

Equally, most of those who stayed with the devil they knew and voted Conservative can pick out enough wrong in just three months to vindicate their decision.

The one issue which unifies them is concern over money - and the regular increases in interest rates since polling day.

Mark Redfern, 29, an engineer, who voted Labour for the first time, said:



Mondeo

"Since they've been in everything seems to have gone up. My mortgage costs about £10 to £15 a month extra."

But he adds: "I think I always knew the rates would have to go up once the election was over. I'm still glad they got in, but I think I'll be able to give a better view in 12 months."

Brian Nicholls, a butcher aged 60, who also made the switch for the first time, is even more cautious. "I think it was a smart move of the Chancellor's to let the Bank of England decide interest rates, as it gets him out of hot water. But it's early days, isn't it?" he said.

A former British Gas travel manager Roger Frost, 54, likes the calm, purposeful way the Home Secretary Jack Straw has acted, citing the inquiry into the murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence.

"I also still like the way Tony Blair is handling things. I've no regrets. The interest rates help with the savings."

Craig Coates, 37, a local authority administrator, admits he was a "sceptical" first-time Labour voter, but is so far impressed with the Government's positive attitude. "I knew the Conservatives were keeping interest rates down so the rises haven't surprised me."

But he added: "Nothing's really hit them yet, has it?"

The caution gives way to outright scepticism among the Tory voters. Susan Lovett, 38, a former sales consultant, is struck by the activity of New Labour. "They seem to be going at a fair

old pace, but I'm not sure they are achieving a lot. For example on devolution - how effective is it going to be?"

Meanwhile, Denise Sparkes, 35, a dressmaker, is unhappy at plans to charge for university tuition and suggestions the age of consent for gays should be lowered to 16. "And I was proved right on interest rates - it's costing us £40 a month more."

But Lionel Baird, 52, a paramedic, conceded he may not have been right in voting Tory. "It can leave a bad taste in the mouth but sometimes you have to admit you've got it wrong. So far I've been pleasantly surprised with the Government."

Roger Jones, 42, the only one of the panel to vote Liberal Democrat, was less enthusiastic. "There's been nothing earth-shattering so far, it's been middle of the road - what some people have described as a lukewarm government."

50 من الاموال

Mr Blair's first 100 days: we like what we see

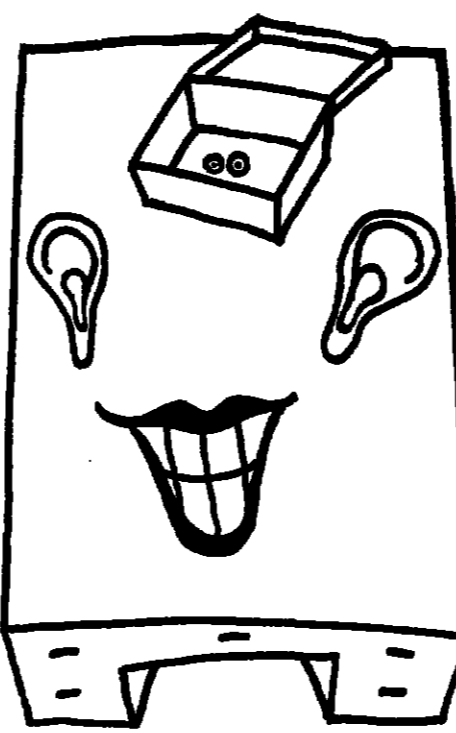
Tony Blair himself was never that keen on the idea of the "Hundred Days". That sort of thing usually ends in tears, he said, when he stressed that he was not promising the Earth, and that making a difference would take time. That was before the election, of course, and now looks like a clever feint so that we would be the more surprised by the energy and pace of the Government's debut.

But he also said that "the project" would not become clear to people "until you are in government and you're doing things". In opposition, he only ever gave us an anti-ideology. He was against dogma: a anti-sleevied manager with common-sense, pragmatic views. And so it came to pass in government. Equally, in opposition he never gave us his character. He adjusted his message instinctively for different audiences, not pretending to be things he was not, but never revealing quirks or prejudices that might offend. The voters had no objection to what they knew of him, but now they know him better, and it should be easier to disentangle his personality from the various personae constructed for him. So what do Mr Blair's first 100 days tell us about the character of the man?

On the first day of the new dawn there was a carefully orchestrated photo-opportunity in Downing Street which one Labour official

with an ironic sense of history said was supposed to look like a "spontaneous outpouring of workers from factories and offices". The portrayal of Everyman with his stylish wife and attractive children amid a sea of Union Jacks was propaganda, but it was also true to the man. Despite the unconvincing tone of Mr Blair's self-deprecatory jokes about not recognising himself as Prime Minister, there is something resolutely unstatesmanlike about him. Much of his first few weeks in office were spent abroad, fêted as, if not the great young hope for the world, the brightest prospect for managerial centrism (with a social conscience) since Kennedy. But television footage of him on a bicycle or running from one meeting to the next at the Amsterdam summit did not convert into a largeness of stature. This is not a fault, however, but a strength. Mr Blair cannot be a larger-than-life personality because he does not have the self-blindness of a Thatcher, or a Kohl, or a Kennedy. The "people who live in the dark" may want to present him as a conviction politician in the Thatcher mould, but ultimately they cannot do it because that is not what he wants to be.

Instead, Mr Blair is supremely good at epitomising what we would like to be as a nation. When he does his "I am one of you" routines (closely modelled, one suspects, on Clinton's "I feel your pain"), what he really seems to be saying is: "Don't you want to be one of



me?" And, on the whole, we do. An overwhelming majority of the nation would like to be smart but casual and drive a Ford Galaxy full of football and Spice-Girl-mad children. And have the exciting job and the high-powered (and attractive) spouse. Everyone in Britain aspires to be informal middle class - even toffs and royalty - with all three members of Prince Charles's crowded marriage falling over each other in their rush to kick a football around the Chequers lawn.

There is something else, too, that we have learnt of Mr Blair's modesty since 1 May. He has been accused of being autocratic, while beginning a programme of democratic power-sharing more radical than anything since the Civil War. What his critics have failed to see is that 10 Downing Street may be at the centre of a tightly controlled web in matters of presentation, but the initiative for policy has genuinely been devolved to departments, especially the devolution from Downing Street to Mr Blair's closest political ally, Gordon Brown. David Blunkett astutely recognised the importance of this point, flooding the Chancellor with memos. Mr Brown is firmly in the driving seat when it comes to the domestic policy decisions that matter: independence for the Bank of England, the "welfare-to-work" programme, billions from the reserves for education. The one big decision directly attributed to the Prime Minister was heavily

presentational - the go-ahead for the Millennium Dome - which is why the job then passed on to Mr Blair's other closest political ally, Peter Mandelson.

It is clearer than ever that policy will be looked at regardless of where it comes from. In his eagerness to bring in business leaders, Mr Blair has tripped up on the sleaze issue, simply because it never occurred to him that he would be judged by the same standards as the outgoing government. But in the longer term, the significance of Lord Simon's appointment is as a token of Mr Blair's pluralism. He has brought in Liberal Democrats and given free rein to Labour figures such as Frank Field and Stephen Byers, whose views most jangle ancient inner-party nerves.

And proposals will be tested against pragmatic criteria - and, above all, market-tested with focus groups and opinion polls. Mr Blair would no doubt protest that policies will also be judged against "values", but this is perhaps the largest area of outstanding doubt. So far, what is striking about his values is how un-specific and consensual they are. Neither the values nor the character of Mr Blair have been tested by crisis - partly because this Labour Government unexpectedly faced a sterling appreciation crisis, rather than devaluation, on coming to office. Until something does go seriously wrong, all judgements are bound to remain heavily provisional.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Health authority covered up failures in psychiatric care

Sir, Your report "Inquiry into deaths finds mental health unit at fault" (2 August) has uncharacteristically missed the point. Sane does not object to families remaining anonymous if they wish. Nor do we want to see blame placed on individual doctors or nurses, although, as professionals, we need to know why the system fails so frequently, and who should be made accountable.

In May 1994, faced with increasing public concern about homicides involving mental patients, the NHS Executive instructed health authorities to initiate independent inquiries into every case. The publication of these

painstaking inquiries has been the major source of evidence of what has gone wrong with psychiatric care both in the community and in hospital, and they are widely used in attempts to improve the service nationally.

When Paul Medley walked out of the Royal Oldham Hospital's psychiatric unit in September 1994 and killed Harry Johnstone, the West Pennine Health Authority set up an independent inquiry, as it was required to do so. However, it also asked that the inquiry should consider the cases of four other "clients" of the hospital.

Unlike any previous homicide inquiry, the report of the inquiry

into "the treatment and care of five individual patients by Oldham NHS Trust" was not published, on grounds of patient confidentiality. The recommendations and some conclusions of the report did not mention the homicide, nor that the other four individuals were dead, having committed suicide. Thus patient confidentiality was, sadly, no longer an issue. All four cases were the subject of a coroner's inquest and were therefore in the public domain.

Keith Jones, commissioning director for the West Pennine Health Authority, said he could not compromise confidentiality, and that he had personally approached

the families, who had unanimously asked that the report should not be published. Within hours, Mary Smith, mother of one of the suicides, broadcast on radio and television asking for publication of the full report. Another of the families has called the report a "cover-up".

It is hard to escape the conclusion that the health authority used the cloak of confidentiality to obscure the truth about the specific failures in mental health care provided in Oldham.

MARJORIE WALLACE
Chief Executive
Sane, The Mental Health Charity
London NW1

No excuses for drug users, whoever they are

Sir, James Humphreys ("The cost to society is so great it makes me dizzy", 7 August) appears to believe that his taking his turn to collect drugs for his friends is purely a matter between him and them. They are, after all, "adults", as he informs us. The point is, of course, that his opinion of the arrangement is completely irrelevant. He was doing something which he knew was illegal, and deserved the consequences.

There are indeed many people in prison who should not be, and the system should be so administered that petty and young offenders are not condemned by association with career criminals to a life of crime. Humphreys says that he is dizzied by the cost to society of imprisonment, but does not seem to acknowledge that, as a representative of the best-educated people in that society, it is his duty to contribute to its improvement. Instead he embraces the habits of a criminal.

Well-educated people who, rather than regret crimes committed out of self-indulgence rather than anything resembling need or pressure, say that the system is wrong, deserved the excesses of the last Home Secretary, whose exit from office is otherwise heartily to be welcomed.
CJT SHEPPARD
Southampton

Sir: Those who lobby against the legalisation of soft drugs try to justify criminalising something no less dangerous than nicotine or alcohol.

The hypocrisy of this situation is infuriating. James Humphreys may well have been prosecuted, convicted, or even sentenced by somebody who enjoys occasional drug use. The only difference between Mr Humphreys and these respectable citizens is that his drug of choice is considered illegal.

ALEC McEACHRAN
Lichfield, Staffordshire

Sir: Perhaps James Humphreys has had time to reflect on the fact that, although he has never directly harmed another person, by buying illegal drugs he fuelled the fire of warfare between rival drug dealers. His money might well have supplied them with the money to purchase weapons and given them the ability to make the lives of innocent people thoroughly miserable.

Can he categorically state that the dealer he bought from did not ever sell to under-18s and is not connected, in any way, to those who protect their trade with violence?
KAREN DIMMOCK
Stourbridge, West Midlands

Energy from London's waste

Sir: Mr Clement of the London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC) is right to draw attention to London's acute shortage of landfill (Letters, 7 August). But the solution he outlines assumes a conflict between recovering energy from waste and recycling that is illusory.

To move towards more sustainable waste management, in line with public aspiration and Government policy, we must pursue an integrated solution. Of course London should recycle more, though LPAC's new target (40 per cent) is heroic indeed. But a moratorium on new energy from waste plants in London will not of itself recycle one more bottle or can. It will however result in the landfilling of millions more tonnes of waste, with the associated emissions of methane - a potent global warming gas.

A balanced approach such as that taken in other European capitals - far from calling for yet more delay - demands that much needed new energy from waste capacity is developed in parallel with major efforts to increase recycling and composting, so as to optimise value recovery overall. In this way wider environmental aims can also be met, such as greenhouse gas reduction and increased generation from renewable sources.

RAY PALIN
Director, Energy from Waste
Association
London W2

Long odds for lottery gamblers

Sir: I never cease to be amazed at how ignorant the general public seem to be on the risks involved in gambling. David Spanier, in his Gambling column (7 August), refers to a leaflet now available in casinos entitled "The Risks of the Game", gaming's equivalent of a (financial) health warning.

I suggest that providing information and education about gambling should go further. It should be taught in schools as part of the maths curriculum. Gambling is, after all, entwined with probability theory. Schools offer education on sex and drugs, so educating pupils about gambling would be a useful addition to their preparation for life.

After all, the whole country is starting to resemble a vast casino, with the general population bombarded from all directions with opportunities to gamble at horrifically unrealistic odds. How many of your lottery-ticket-buying readers appreciate, for example, that if they bought £100 worth of tickets a week, they could expect to pick up a jackpot once every 2,700 years?

NIC SZEREMETA
General Secretary
European Poker Players' Association
Torquay, Devon



'Endearing but villainous animals': the Boston raccoon

'Mythical' raccoon spotted in Boston

Sir: Mary Dejevsky says of raccoons: "these endearing but villainous animals are just another component of the American myth... the truth is that they do not exist." ("The great suburban sinner who has gone to ground", 4 August).

I have never yet photographed a unicorn successfully, but Ms Dejevsky may like to see this photograph of the "mythical" raccoon taken from a second-floor

window in Monument Square, Charlestown, Boston, Massachusetts, at 7.30am on the morning of 15 July this year. He was seated on an old fire escape which stops at first-floor level, some 12 feet above the ground.

I wonder if any reader can advise me on the best time of day to see a unicorn?
LIZ FINCH
Liverpool

Othello: educated gentleman of any colour

Sir: Why do we accept the assertion that "not white" = "black" ("Can it be wrong to 'black up' for Othello?", 7 August)? Othello was a Moor; strictly, a person of Berber and Arab descent; but a word more loosely used at the time of Shakespeare to indicate any persons of North African or Islamic origin. He may indeed have had black ancestry (the trans-Saharan slave trade flourished for thousands of years and is rumoured to continue to this day) but this is not necessary. All that is certain from the text is that he was darker-skinned than 16th-century Venetians, to whom "black" meant anything swarther than themselves.

Far more important than his colour is Othello's cultural background, from a military Islamic society strongly influenced by an ancient and sophisticated Persian culture, and with trading contacts with India and China. It is unlikely he would have reached the rank of general in his own country, let alone Venice, without education in science and the arts. Arab culture saw no incompatibility between a soldier's profession and an appreciation of literature and poetry. They were essential, social

accomplishments, hence those poetic and storytelling skills which captivated Desdemona. Yet this sophisticated gentleman is too often portrayed as an unpolished simpleton played upon by the cunning Venetian.

Cast a man of any colour as Othello but, please, let us see a more imaginative interpretation than theatrical tradition has afforded us.
DEBORAH TOMPKINSON
Maidenhead, Berkshire

Sir: Film and television particularly have made us used to seeing the "real thing", but this insistent realism may incur its own losses. Some of the greatest and most memorable performances in the recent past have been big make-up jobs: for me Laurence Olivier's Othello, Charles Laughton's Quasimodo, Alec Guinness's Fagin, and (best of all, perhaps) John Hurt's Elephant Man. Real equality may find it perfectly acceptable to portray physical characteristics not possessed by the performer. Political correctness may be a deadly brake on creativity.
IAN FLINTOFF
London SW6

Rethink UK sanctions on Iraq

Sir: Geoff Simons (Letters: "Iraqis killed by sanctions", 1 August) is correct in pointing out yet more gaps in New Labour's supposed ethical foreign policy, but his point needs further emphasis.

The UK is not merely a member of the Security Council which renews sanctions on Iraq every two months, but is also, alongside the US, the principal supporter of the sanctions regime. Britain therefore bears considerable responsibility for the deaths resulting from what is termed in polite political conversation "the containment of Iraq". The sanctions policy was barbaric in the aftermath of the Gulf War in 1991, it is even more barbaric six years later, when it no longer appears to serve any purpose other than to maintain the status quo in the Middle East. Despite the attempts of Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, to make the sanctions policy look positive, killing is killing, it is not kindness. Seven years is too long, it is time to rethink the sanctions regime.
SIMON FAULKNER
Campaign Against Repression and For Democratic Rights in Iraq, North West Manchester

Children who aren't ready to read

Sir: Thomas Sutcliffe and his son are locked in mutual bafflement: son can't read and Dad can't understand why not (Tabloid, 7 August).

For years, I have been baffled over why the British force little children to read before they are reading-ready. Making the connection between spoken sounds and little squiggly symbols on paper is actually quite a complex process. There is plenty of well-documented evidence, acted on in the States and in Europe, that most children make this connection around the age of six or seven. That is when they start school, and they learn to read in weeks.

In the UK we start them off at barely five, some as young as four. We have confused nursery school with school. We mass-produce educational "failures" who need special education to help them out of their misery. It has become a British cottage industry to provide therapy for children who were taught formal lessons before their time.

Quintilian was right - wait till they are seven. Parents could play with their children and they could enjoy each other's company in those precious early years. What a thought!
RUTH VECHT
Special Needs Teacher
London NW11

Pay per view

Sir: I have a suggestion on charging for, or, rather, the financing of, museums and galleries. Here in Italy, because I have reached ripe early middle age, I am entitled to enter the main galleries free of charge. Being as vain as any *grande horizontale*, and being paid decently for one of the most enjoyable jobs in the world, I do not exercise that right. (I have tried claiming to be under 18, but that never works.)

My suggestion is that (thinking of the Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, or the Museo Capodimonte, Naples, for example) our museums charge, say, five pounds. Those claiming, on their own say-so, to be under 25, or over 65 should be admitted free. Anyone cheating to get in deserves the educational experience thus gained.
Professor ARTHUR MARWICK
Royal Hotel, Naples

The writer is Professor of History at the Open University.

LETTER from THE EDITOR

Summer again, and the real editor escapes for a few days' peace - or so he thinks. Andrew Marr (Top Man, as we call him here) chose for some reason known only to himself to take his family off to Devon this week.

Quite why he didn't go to France, where he can get silly numbers of francs for his pound, it's hard to say: that's certainly where the economics editor is going on holiday. Indeed, she had the foresight to buy her francs 10 days ago, when the pound was riding high. If she'd bought them yesterday she'd have been a lot worse off, which just goes to show that, on matters of personal finance, you should trust the economics editor of *The Independent*.

Still, on day two Andrew called in just to see how things were going in his absence. "Fine," said I. "Don't worry; just relax and enjoy yourself." "Humph," he said. "Right now we're cooped up in the kitchen, with three children going stir crazy; it's chucking it down outside, and anything but relaxing." Never mind, I assured him, the clouds will blow over, you'll have a lovely time.

Next morning the news editor bounced into our morning conference suggesting that we send a photographer down to the Devon coast, because there were flood warnings all over: "Chuckling it down, so I'm told," he declared cheerfully.

"Terrible pity for anyone on holiday there. Oh, isn't that where the editor's gone for his break? Perhaps we should ring him up and get him to send us a piece (chortle, chortle)."

Now, it is true, and I am ashamed to admit it, that most good journalists do have a small vein of mischief in their bodies that would incline them to be mildly amused, in a *schadenfreude* kind of way, at the thought of the Top Man pacing irritably up and down his Devon cottage kitchen muttering imprecations at the weather.

But I firmly pointed out that that was not fair, and that we should be more civil and understanding about it.

So I didn't ask Andrew to write a piece - I just rang him to - well, you know, ask what the weather was like. "Humph."

I'm thinking of coming back early," he snarled. "If it goes on like this."

Next morning the news editor breezed cheerfully into morning conference. "Guess what. You know where the editor's staying, down on the south coast? Well, there's a place near there they had three inches of rain yesterday. No kidding. In only a couple of hours. Chuckling it down." And we all looked out of our 18th-floor windows in Canary Wharf, at the baking hot sun and the clear blue sky, marred only by the faint haze of yellow smog out across the City.

Well, I thought, better ring

'What's the weather been like in London?' Oh, I lied, as kindly as I could, 'a bit cloudy now and then, in between the unbearably hot and really rather unpleasantly insistent sunshine'

the editor and commiserate. "Gather the weather's not so good down there. I hope you're still having a good time though," I said, as kindly as I could.

"Humph," came the reply. "What's the weather been like in London?"

"Oh," I lied, as kindly as I could, "a bit cloudy now and then, in between the unbearably hot and really rather unpleasantly insistent sunshine." There was a long pause, and I could almost hear him thinking what we all learn every summer, but then conveniently forget before the next time: holidays are never any less stressful than work - only the stress is different, which makes it OK.

Never mind, next week Andy's back, and things will look up again, and I'll escape for a few days with the family. We're off to - where was it again? Ah yes: mid-Devon. Best take the wellies.

Colin Hughes

QUOTE UNQUOTE

I hope it will soon become smart for the British sneerers to join the rise of Thatcher should prove of interest. I think eight volumes should be about right - Lord St John of Fawley, Tory peer, who is about to publish his memoirs

I love sleeping. My greatest talent. I once fell asleep on stage, playing a statue of Queen Victoria - Nicholas McAuliffe, actress

The assumption is that because we are surrounded with a plethora of sexual messages in the media, people are enjoying healthy, happy, sexual relationships. That is not the case - Anne Weyman, of the Family Planning Association

They won't be like Alan Clark's diaries, but the fall of Heath and the rise of Thatcher should prove of interest. I think eight volumes should be about right - Lord St John of Fawley, Tory peer, who is about to publish his memoirs

The English have a natural tendency to yobbishness. Ally this to collectivism, and you have a very nasty mixture - AN Wilson, author

Neil has taken to reading newspapers off the shelves in our local newsagent, but we always welcome copies of yesterday's from neighbours - Christine Hamilton announcing that her former Tory MP husband has been forced to cancel their newspaper subscriptions

the saturday story

Happiness is a quiet week in Ulster

One of the most common charges levelled at journalists covering northern Ireland is that they rarely focus on the positive, that they only want to report bloodshed and violence. Well, it has been sunny all week in Belfast. While the local news carried pictures of storms and severe flooding across the south of Ireland and England, these stopped dead at Ulster, leaving the people of the province basking in glorious sunshine.

There were other reasons to be cheerful: on Thursday the supergroup U2 announced that they were to play a massive gig in Belfast, a piece of news described by one newspaper as "one of the best the city has received in a very long time". "We're very excited about it. I don't think there's been a big outdoor concert in Belfast like this ever," said U2's manager Paul McGuinness. Compensation indeed for the news yesterday that the city had lost out on its bid to host the next Eurovision Song Contest.

There was jubilation in the world of business, when two large foreign companies announced investment worth almost £7m in Belfast and Newtownards, with the promise of a significant number of new jobs. And then there was politics. Last week saw the dozing monster that is the talks process once again lumber slowly and warily into life.

This was the week that Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams met with the Secretary of State Mo Mowlam, for the first time since before the previous ceasefire was broken in January 1996. Although the meeting was billed as preliminary and largely symbolic, it lasted well over its predicted time

The weather's been sunny in Northern Ireland, and despite some storm clouds on the horizon, a cautious optimism is in the air, says Jojo Moyes

span and ended with the promise of further talks. Significantly, perhaps, Dr Mowlam said afterwards that both sides had acknowledged "the need to change a bit". There was widespread acclaim for an agreement by Ulster Unionist Ken Maginnis and Sinn Féin MP Martin McGuinness to take part in a face-to-face televised debate next week, the first such meeting since before the previous ceasefire. Media commentators Roy Greenslade described it on BBC Radio Ulster as "the thinnest of bridges", but nevertheless a cause for optimism.

Predictably, perhaps, the Reverend Ian Paisley was critical of the decision, saying that unionists should not speak to the IRA until they were disarmed. But there was general support for the move, even among unionists, who said he should attend - even if only to ensure the Republican view did not go unchallenged. There

was also concern about heightening splits within the Unionist community - a worry not alleviated by Mr Paisley's charge that Mr Maginnis's decision signalled "the beginning of the end for the Ulster Unionist Party".

"We want Paisley in the talks," said one "lifelong unionist", sunning herself outside Belfast's City Hall. "His mandate is to represent us. If he stays outside, we'll end up being left behind."

Indeed, Mr Paisley's insistence on staying outside the talks process appeared to be out of step with much popular feeling. The host of Radio Ulster's *Talkback* programme, a forum for all shades of opinion, noted on Thursday that the endless negative preoccupation with sectarianism could be dispiriting. He sounded positively resigned shortly afterwards when one caller chose to rant about marches. "Is there no way we can move this thing on?" he asked plaintively.

But there were causes for optimism, too. Tensions over today's planned Apprentice Boys parades were eased when, following a police edict, Orangemen agreed to re-route some of the smaller "feeder marches" that lead into the main parade around Londonderry's walls. Although disappointed by the police decision, Orange leaders stressed that they wanted the marches to pass off peacefully and agreed to stay within the confines of the law. By yesterday afternoon, their protests had been confined to the handing in of a letter, and, of course, a protest march.

The *Irish News* was among those to pick up on the good mood. It noted yesterday that after last month's scenes at the

Garvaghy Road, it had seemed inevitable that the rest of the summer would witness "a long and bloody series of confrontations across northern Ireland". Instead, it said, an "unexpected outbreak of common sense" had heartened those hoping for a more lasting peace.

And there were other, smaller moves towards reconciliation. Earlier this week, Londonderry's SDLP Mayor, Martin Bradley, helped launch a pageant organised by Apprentice Boys governor, Alistair Simpson, at the organisation's headquarters. Mr Simpson spoke of his delight at welcoming the mayor, the first nationalist mayor ever to attend such an event, saying afterwards: "It is something that I never dreamt of - that we would have this type of thing here."

Martyn Lewis, the news-caster who once famously complained that there should be more good news, might have enjoyed himself here last week.

Even the potential loss of John Hume from the peace process to the Irish presidency was largely overshadowed by the possibilities for amusement afforded by the prospect of the singer Dana as his opponent. These may be small steps in one short week, but the knock-on effects are crucial. If the ceasefire, no matter how precarious, has one important consequence, it is in helping rebuild the confidence of Ulster's business and industrial base. Belfast suffers some of the worst unemployment in Europe, with all the resulting economic and social problems, and no one would dispute the need for further investment.

Colin Anderson, president of Northern Ireland's Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which represents more than 3,000 businesses, said yesterday that that with this in mind, the business community had viewed the week's events with "cautious optimism". "We have not experienced the euphoria

that occasioned the last ceasefire so we want to wait and see ... but we're hopeful that it's here to stay," he said.

Mr Anderson pointed out that business can be an important unifying influence. The Chamber of Commerce, he said, has been meeting with political leaders in an attempt to push the province's economy further up the political agenda. A key factor in ensuring a lasting peace was to put money in people's pockets. "Then they see life isn't so bad, and they're not as likely to get involved in violent activities."

As he spoke, Economy Minister Adam Ingram was in the United States accompanied by Ulster Unionist Jeffrey Donaldson in a joint attempt to woo foreign investors. Mr Anderson said that despite the end of the previous ceasefire, the underlying trend for northern Ireland was still one of growth. This appeared to be borne out by a stroll around the

city centre, which was yesterday bustling with shoppers.

"The one thing that builds people's confidence is the lack of bombs," said a spokeswoman for the group Families Against Intimidation. "People like to know they can come into the city centre and feel safe." There are other, perhaps subconscious, factors that contribute to that confidence: the unsettling noise of overhead security forces helicopters, so often omnipresent, was absent. And in an hour, only one armoured vehicle passed by.

One of the things least often reported about Belfast is its beauty, and friendliness. In the south of the city is rarely affected by trouble, and much of the local countryside is stunning. Mr Anderson describes it as "the best kept economic and tourism secret in Europe". Should the ceasefire continue, there is little to stop it becoming a major tourist destination.

Tourism is often the litmus paper of confidence in the

province. Yesterday a survey of 89 of Belfast's hoteliers revealed that 79 per cent believed the success of the peace process was the most crucial factor in developing their business. Their confidence is not yet widespread, however. Equal numbers (27 per cent) described themselves as pessimistic about the future as said they were optimistic. This is unsurprising. Even the uninitiated can appreciate that a week is a long time in Ulster politics, and for all the good signs during the last week, there was plenty that could be put forward to dampen any prematurely high spirits.

Yesterday morning, the residents of Newtownabbey, the site of a proposed march by the loyalist Royal Black Preceptory today, were calling on "nationalists throughout Ireland to come along and support the beleaguered residents in their time of need", if attempts were made to force the march through. They were planning to rally last night at the village RUC station. The *Belfast Telegraph* noted that there was "the prospect of serious trouble unless the situation can be defused".

The same morning, 1,000 Protestants marched through Londonderry, protesting about their "right to march". Both had the potential to heighten tensions over the weekend. The Parades Commission was said to be keeping a close watch. Meanwhile, police noted that levels of so-called punishment attacks were still high. Claims from the family of a shooting victim that the gunmen had described themselves as Republicans also tempered some of the optimism that the police had allowed themselves since the latest ceasefire was announced.

In what appeared to be a deliberate attempt at provocation, two hoax devices were delivered to the offices of Unionist councillors last week. An Orange hall outside Newry was evacuated when a hoax bomb was detonated in an arson attack. And yesterday homes were damaged in an arson attack. It was, said one RUC source, much too early to draw any conclusions about the ceasefire.

A few clouds were gathering overhead yesterday evening, signifying a possible end to the balmy weather. But across the city, people in Belfast appeared to be looking for the good. "Cautious optimism" was still in place that the weekend's planned parades would pass without violence, prompting the question: could one week's good news be a building block for the province's future?



Business as (un)usual: shopping in Londonderry yesterday

Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

FREE

Pampers

Baby Wipes 24s

R.R.P. £1.29

when you buy any Pampers Carry Pack

Hills PHARMACY

LLOYDS CHEMISTS

Offer available until Monday 18th August Subject to availability

karen krizanovich

Self-help books are comedy. It's not that they don't do their job. Lots of normal people take secret delight in seeing the words, "You're all right, really," in print. If it's in print, it must be true.

This scares me. I'm suspicious of books like *The Celestine Prophecy*, a wonky bestseller which makes you want to ask the author, "What colour is the sky in your world?" Merely insisting that Life is Beautiful turns self-help into the fuzzy-thinker's crutch, tossed aside when you get better.

Hard-core self-help, however, is honourable. The best come with aggressive titles like *Toilet Training Your Inner Child*, *I'm Okay, You're Going To Hell* and *Loosing Weight By Eating Less And Exercising More*. That's why I'm ripping through *Emotional Blackmail* by Dr Susan Forward with Donna Frazier (Bantam Press, £15.99). The masterful copywriting on its dustjacket implores: "Do [important people in your life] shower you with approval when you give in to them and take it away when you don't?"

Soon you're weeping. "Yes! Yes!" and leaning against the cash till book and credit card in hand. Although it baits browsers with the same dirty tricks that *Correspondence* uses (hot cover lines on the outside, striving for mediocrity on the inside), *EB* delivers the goods. It's touchy-feely American analysis-u-like. The doctor's favourite example of a manipulative phrase is, "Gee, I wish

someone would open the window," rather than, "Could you please open the window?"

Nice try. In my house, whining works best. "I'm dying here. Did you have an affair with a double-glazing salesman or is this a terrarium? When did you move the sofa and the TV into the oven?"

Dr Forward is no slouch. She's authored two best-selling milestones in self-help - *Toxic Parents* and my personal favourite, *Men Who Hate Women and the Women Who Love Them*. (I want to write a rip-off called *Men Who Hate Women Who Hate Them More*.)

Emotional Blackmail has helped me already. The other night, two dear but squiffy friends begged me to come and party with them. "If you don't come over," one pleaded, "I'll commit suicide." On page 39, Dr Forward calls suicide threats "The Ultimate Self-Punishment". Taking a tip from page 239 (Strategy No 4: Using Humor), I [strategised] "Oh? What kind of flowers should I send?" Thanks to Dr Forward, I won. The police are still searching for my friend but only a manipulated person would feel guilty about that.

Taking a step back from feeling righteous, I re-read Forward's checklist responses to emotional blackmail. In effect, defence phrases such as, "I'm sure that's what you believe" are merely manipulation lobbed back. It's like saying, "I'm sorry you got angry when I called you lard-ass." Apologising for their feelings, you're

actually apologising for nothing.

Concerning "the silent treatment", her last advice is to "Let some things slide". This reminds me of my *French for Travellers* phrase book which had "STOP OR I'LL SCREAM" in phonetic French. With *Emotional Blackmail*, thousands of shook-up people will also be feverishly thumbing its pages, trying to find the right thing to say at the right time. My advice? Let everything slide - including your personal hygiene, housework and coming home at night. That's what I think.

Somebody said that Stella Tennant was a supermodel for two very good reasons other than being thin and beautiful. Both of her names are names of lager. Hence, if my mother had called me Bud, Miller, Coors or Rolling Rock, I too would be a supermodel who had to beat men off with a bat.

We are jealous of beauty. We women hate other women who have that ineffable oomph. In the original script for the movie *The Long Kiss Goodnight*, the heroine is described as "effortlessly beautiful". No matter what she does, she's gorgeous. This irked me so much I couldn't finish the script. Excuse me? Effortless beauty? Never in anyone over the age of 12.

Yet here is Elizabeth Hurley doing just that. I hate to say it but she is marvellous in the new Pathé film, *Austin Powers - International Man Of Mystery*. Released in September, this is the best

comedy I've seen since *Airplane!* Liz plays the sex bomb Bond girl with M Appeal to Mike Myers' Austin Powers. He's a cryogenically frozen secret agent/photographer/rock star from the Sixties, thawed out to battle Dr Evil (also played by Myers).

It's fast company for Liz but she lets the plethora of breast jokes do the work for her. I'll forgive the massively airbrushed Estée Lauder commercials and her overblown, blowfish lips. In *Austin Powers*, she is, if not redeemed, made.

I hate her. I hated her even more when she was going on recently about her cursed "boy's bum". In her youth, she had to stuff her jeans with tissues to get "a curve". This girl loves fry-ups. Bacon surmises are her best friends, next to Hollywood bigwigs. This is a gorgeous woman who wears nothing but jeans and T-shirts around the house and, famously, no bra.

Liz, can you say "Cooper's Droop" five times fast? Who repealed the law of gravity around your chest?

The truth is, Liz Hurley is playing at effortless beauty. Just wait until her chain smoking catches up with her. She'll look like a rucksack with eyes.

Or maybe not. In Scalpel, or, Los Angeles, California, plastic surgery is a new religion. A talented surgeon can wipe away all traces of sin from your skin. You'll look and feel years younger. And, like those old medieval indulgences, it'll only cost a lot.



IMAGE OF THE WEEK A scene of complete serenity. Or is it? The rolling hills and cosy little farmhouses of Dovedale in Derbyshire belie the fact that more tourists in pursuit of peace and quiet will visit this beauty spot this year than ever before.
Photograph by Brian Harris at 1/500th at f5.6 on 300mm using 160 ASA film. For a copy of this picture, for £15, phone 0171 293 2534



thelongweekend

THE INDEPENDENT • SATURDAY 9 AUGUST 1997

WORDS OF THE WEEK

Answers to the meaning of creation

Five leading writers from a variety of religious and cultural backgrounds, including Fay Weldon, right, answer questions of faith in a series of Prom interval talks



self-examination. Without it our humanity is diminished.

Karen Armstrong: We all know the power of poetry. The sound, rhythm and allusive connotations of the words chosen by a poet can take language into a new dimension; poetic language can enter us deeply, reaching a level that is more fundamental than the cerebral; it can lift us momentarily beyond ourselves. Theology should work in the same way. It cannot be a mere statement of fact; it must touch us emotionally and give us intimations of transcendence. The first Muslims were often converted not so much by the message of the Koran as by the extraordinary beauty of the text, which cannot come across in an English translation. Thus Omar had been fiercely critical of Mohammed until he heard the Koran recited aloud. The poetry reached through his reserves of intellectual resistance to a core of receptivity that he had been unaware of. We seem to have lost this sense of scripture and God-talk and have become obsessed with the historicity, rationality and literal meaning of theology. As our Western modernity has spread to other parts of the globe, Jews,

Christians and Muslims have all become worried about the integrity of their scriptures in a new way. Unless and until we recover a sense of the language of religion as dogmatic, in the Greek sense, our view of religious truth will be impoverished and we will deny ourselves an important means of discovering that transcendence which human beings are compelled to seek.

Michèle Roberts: The old mother goddesses, officially cast out by the masculine religion of Christianity with its drama of Father and Son, survived in pagan practices, in the folklore and heresies that have always flourished at the fringes. The female body, so feared and repressed, returns to haunt and dazzle us in the shapes of visionaries and visions - the Virgin Mary, apparently increasingly making herself visible all over the world in our own day, seems to represent, to those who see her or are moved by reports of her presence, Godness itself. God is presented as female form.

There is clearly a tremendous hunger among people to have bodily experiences of God: why else do miraculous statues bleed and weep? Here are those physical processes shunned by the Churches - menstruation, lactation - newly made numinous and holy. The reality of these miraculous events and visions is a psychic one. People produce and project their own images, individually and communally. God is worshipped through images of the physical. God is found through images of the physical. God is not any longer simply Him Up There. God has become part of us.

'Flesh Made Word' can be heard during the Proms tomorrow on BBC Radio 3.

INSIDE

Julia Kaminski meets Geraldine James 3

Travel & outdoors

Point of views: the Ardnamurchan Peninsula9
Outing to Edinburgh10
Painswick's perfect post office11
Heidelberg remembered13



Far East14, 15
Gardening16

PLUS

Games, crossword2
Arts, reviews485
Books6, 7, 8
All consuming18-20
Motoring21
Money, property23-26
TV, radio reviews27
Today's TVBack page

Fay Weldon: I see God as the Author of the Universe ... God the writer. "In the beginning was the word ..." See it literally. The word on the page, the idea confined and controllable, shared by our common understanding ... To those who are creative, creation seems as nothing. You make something where nothing was before: easy peasy. You think it up. The greater the gap between nothing and that something is how you judge the quality of creation. A good book floats free, a bad book bumps along on the ground. The gap between a world without Shakespeare's plays and the world with them is pretty big. The gap between non-existence and the entire universe, God's doing, is of course overwhelming."

Howard Jacobson: There is a clown, sacred to the Sioux Indian people, whose business it is to be his own contradiction, his own upside-down shadow, a refutation of all reason, a man who says the opposite to what he means, and does the opposite to what it is usual and practicable to do. Like all clowns he is divided down the middle, the hair on the right side of his head shaved, the hair on the left hanging long. He is called a *heyoka*, or contrary clown.

But in order to perform in a *heyoka* ceremony it is not enough merely to wish to do so. In order to joke, you need to have dreamed; in order to cause laughter you need to have experienced terror. If you want to be a Sioux comedian, you have first to be a visionary. A dog is killed, its neck broken, its carcass offered to the thunder gods before being flung into boiling water. While the dog boils the clowns perform their tricks, carrying bows that are too long to bend and arrows that are too crooked to fly. They shiver in the

heat. They pretend to drown in shallow water. They make as if to swim in mud. They say the opposite of what they mean. Everybody laughing, everybody trying to get a piece of the dog flesh. Mirth and ferocity interchangeable.

When the ceremony was over, everybody felt a great deal better, for it had been a day of fun. They were better able now to see the greenness of the world, the wideness of the sacred day, the colours of the earth, and to set these in their minds. Does art have any higher aim than that? Does religion? To revivify the senses, to reconfirm belief in the sacredness of existence, to restore glory to the earth ... and to set these wonders in the mind of all who behold them.

Hanif Kureishi: Fundamentalism provides security. For the fundamentalist, as for all reactionaries, everything has been decided. Truth has been agreed and nothing must change. For serene liberals, on the other hand, the consolations of knowing seem less satisfying than the pleasures of puzzlement, and of wanting to discover for oneself. But the feeling that one cannot know everything, that

there will always be maddening and live questions about who one is and how it is possible to make a life with other people who don't accept one, can be devastating. Perhaps it is only so long that one can live with that kind of puzzlement. Rationalists have always underestimated the need people have for belief. Enlightenment values don't provide spiritual comfort or community or solidarity. Islam could do this in a country that was supposed to be home but which could, from day to day, seem alien.

Muslim fundamentalism has always seemed to me to be profoundly wrong, overly restrictive and frequently cruel. But there are reasons for its revival that are comprehensible. It is this that has made me want to look at it not only in terms of ideas, but in stories, in character, in terms of what people do ... Perhaps the greatest book of all, and certainly one of the most pleasurable, *The One Thousand and One Nights*, is written in Arabic. This creativity, the making of something which didn't exist before, the vigour and stretch of a living imagination, is a human affirmation of another kind, and a necessary and important form of



Hertz rents and leases Ford's and other fine cars. Internet: www.hertz.com. *Subject to availability by owner. †Prices are for weekly rentals commencing after 4/7/97 for the smallest car category reserved and prepaid in the UK. They include Unlimited Mileage, Damage Waiver, Theft Protection, Airport Service, Excess and local taxes. (UK rates do not include airport taxes and fees) (CA vehicle licensed for use of 2000 days). Prices subject to change and availability. ‡Extra days rate in Malaga for a rental after the first week.

"For £12 a day* you could have had them on the wheel."

25% off

each additional day after the first week's rental at £108 in Spain.

Check out this amazing offer for prepaid holiday car rental in Spain for rentals starting before 20 September.

Rent a car in Malaga and it'll only cost £108! Then, for each additional day's rental after the first week, we'll give you a massive 25% discount!

If you combine our unbeatable price and service, it's hard to imagine that you'll find a better deal for holiday car rental.

And if you're travelling to the USA, then check out these great prepaid weekly rates:

FLORIDA£110
CALIFORNIA£125

For these and other amazing offers, simply call your local travel agent, or Hertz direct on:

0990 90 60 90

Hertz
Holidays

The world's #1 car rental company

A home-made stealth bomber – the ideal accessory on a summer day, writes George Buchanan

We go kite flying in the summer. The weather is nearly always perfect: blustery winds, scudding clouds, squalls of horizontal rain – the very thing for soaring birds and kite flyers.

Now and again we make a kite. Of course one can buy a kite but we prefer to make our own. The ones we make are large, slow and heavy, and resemble monstrous stealths sliding across the sky. In strong winds they are difficult to fly, prone to spectacular crashes and limb wrenching surges of power. In these conditions they might, at best, last a few days, and survive a dozen nosedives and cartwheels, before the sticks splinter, the seams tear, and the joints spring loose.

Cattle and walkers on the Common may have seen our latest monster flying high. You can't buy a Flying Manta but this is how to make one. It shouldn't take more than an hour.

Paradoxically, because the materials are so heavy, it has to be quite large to fly. Twelve and a half square foot of wing area is about the minimum viable size for summer stealths.

For the wing fabric you will need a scrap of damp-proof membrane (which you can buy from a builders' merchant), four long bamboo bean sticks, a roll of parcel tape, a roll of carpet tape (the reinforced kind), a key ring and a wire coat hanger. To cut and twist the wire you will want a pair of pliers, and unless you have teeth like a ferret, you will need a knife to cut through the tape. An unexpected ingredient is the spring from a derelict clothes peg.

Using the wire from the coathanger, fashion the twisted inserts illustrated (fig 1). Fit them in the wide end of each stick: the Z-shaped one goes into the centre stick, and the two loops fit in the ends of the outer sticks. Bind some parcel tape round the ends to prevent them splitting, and secure the inserts by knotting string to them and taping the ends of the string to the bamboo.

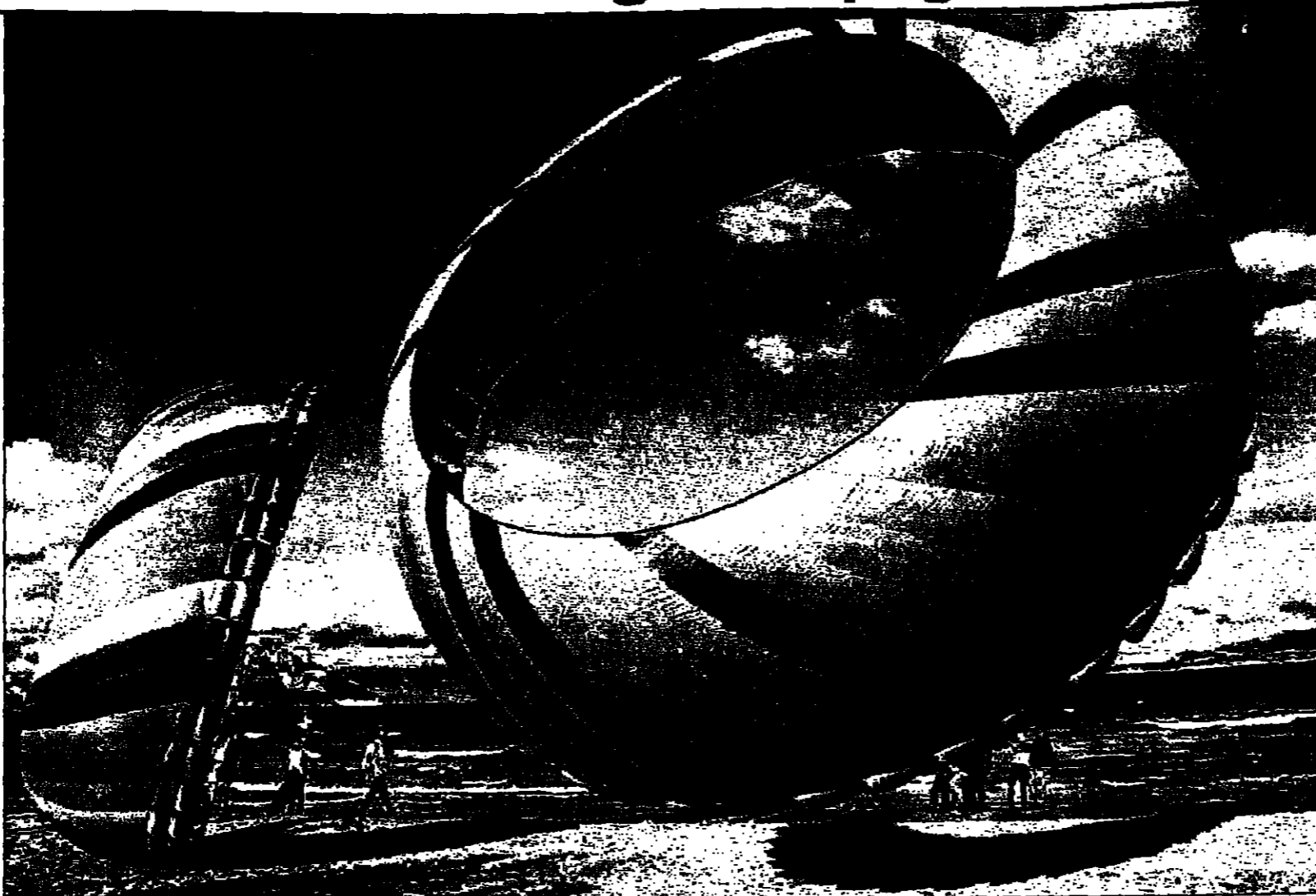
Fit the three sticks together. The Z-shaped wire is inserted through the wire loops in the outer two sticks, and secures them. Lay the sticks in position on top of the plastic sheet and cut the sheet to size (fig 2). Tape the edges of the sheet to the two outside sticks. Use the carpet tape at the point, at the end of each stick, and at one or two intermediate stations between.

Make the anchorage wires for the cross stick (fig 3), and tape them to the side sticks, equidistant from the point. When the kite is laid flat, the cross stick should be about two inches short of a fit. In the air, the wings sweep upwards and hold the stick in position.

Now fit the harness strings. These comprise a centre loop which is fastened to the point, and runs to the very end of the centre stick, and one intermediate string, that passes through the wing and is tied to the centre stick, more or less at its centre.

Before fastening the rear end of the centre loop, thread the string through the barrel of the clothes peg spring. I have illustrated a round turn and two half hitches which is suitable for tying the ends of the string.

Knot the intermediate string to the middle of the centre stick, and pull it



Gain altitude with attitude

tight. Make a small incision in the wing, and slip the string through. With the kite upside down on the floor, pull the centre loop taut, and fasten the intermediate string to the barrel of the spring which (you will notice) slides freely along the centre loop. This gives you the adjustment facility you need to control lift.

The kite string is fastened to the barrel of the spring, and its position on the centre loop determines lift. This is found by experimentation. Too far back and the kite lurches backwards,

too far forwards, and there is insufficient lift. To secure the spring, take a single hitch round one of its arms as illustrated (fig 6). Fix a shackle or a substantial key ring on the spring as a fixing point for the kite string.

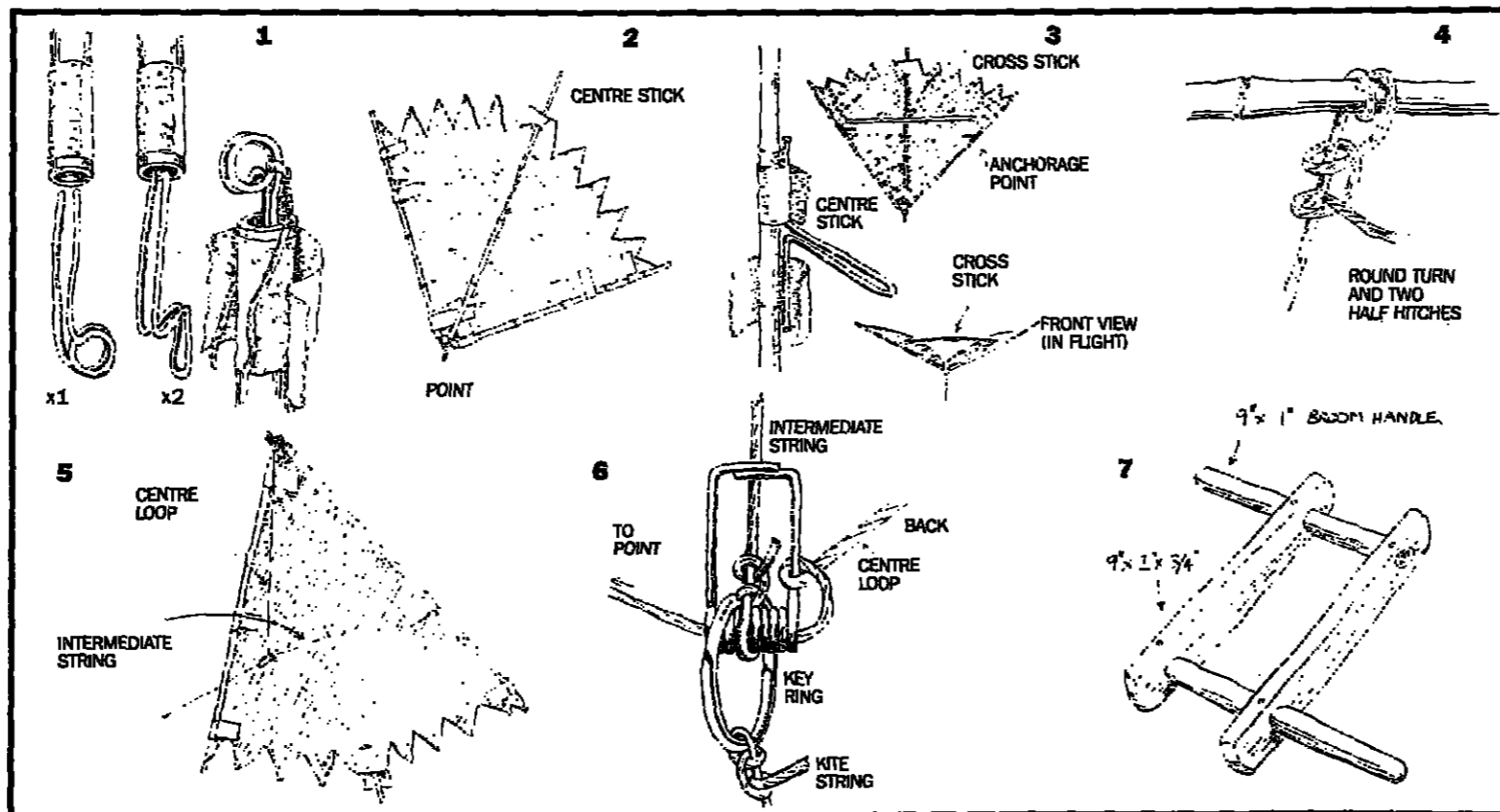
The tail should be long, and have considerable windage; its drag helps keep the kite head to wind. Make the tail from offcuts of the plastic sheet, and make it longer than you think necessary. Cut the tail to length when you first fly the kite: ie if it doesn't lift, snip off a few feet.

Secure all the side seams with parcel tape. At close quarters it looks very amateurish, but at 20,000 feet it doesn't notice.

I made the winder from two 9-inch lengths of 2 x 3/4 inch pine, and two 9-inch lengths of broom handle. (fig 9). You will need tough string to hold this kind of ordinary kite thread will snap. Polypropylene baler twine or garden string is ideal.

Fly the kite in a wide open space, miles away from power cables, and thunder clouds. If Defenders and

Troopers, and four wheel drive Subarus trundle across the turf to get a clearer view, wave them away. Gentle as a lamb in soft winds, in rough weather the Manta is an unpredictable and short tempered beast, prone to violent changes of attitude. It might take a sudden dislike to them, and dent their lids. And grapple tight to any child weighing less than 11 stone to make sure they don't soar skywards. In an emergency, let go the string; given its freedom, our Manta tumbles gently to earth.



Games people play

Pandora Melly talks to the man who beat the man who was the father of the South London ping-pong champion.

Craigie Althison RA, 70, painter

I used to play ping-pong in the nursery at home with my brother, and if we did anything wrong during the day, we weren't allowed to play. If you dropped your napkin, that was just one of the things that mattered, or if you didn't eat the fat at lunch. It wasn't my parents, it was the people who looked after us. The worst one was the governess.

Ping-pong was taken very seriously. I expect I usually lost, because I remember hanging the table in a temper. Later I played with the best of three, but if Euan Uglow. We used to play the best of five, so there were huge rows and banging the table. I liked playing with Euan, because he hated losing.

I was always told that I had a cheat's serve, because you're meant to do it sideways. It doesn't say so in the rules, but I was accused of serving in a cheating way and there were rows over that. I'd drop the ball on the table, and hit it across. Are you meant to have it up in the air or something first?

My claim to fame in this area is that I beat the father of the South London ping-pong champion. I never let Euan forget that. It doesn't mean a thing really, because the father was doing the decorating here. I played him and beat him, but it wasn't like beating the South London champion.

I like ping-pong because it's not at all sporty and you don't have to be dressed up for it. Unfortunately I no longer have the table. I took it to Italy, and we had it outside, but it got all wet and fell to bits. I've always meant to get another one.

Premonitions

On Paul McKenna's appalling *Paranormal World* on television the other week, they showed a chap in Nevada who has been doing research into precognition. Subjects are wired up to a device that gauges emotional reaction by measuring electrical activity in the skin, then they are shown randomly selected photographs, some of which are idyllic and pastoral and the others are so filthy that they had to blot out the rude bits on our screens. Anyway, what the results claim to show is that subjects reacted to the emotionally charged pictures even before they had been selected. The experiments were cited as evidence of precognition.

This, of course, merely adds a human dimension to the celebrated work of the parapsychologist R L Morris who, in 1967, showed that if you put three goldfish in a tank, then use a random number generator to decide which one to fish out, there is a tendency for the about-to-be-caught goldfish to swim about a bit more frantically before its number comes up.

We mention all this only because of some work we have been doing in our newspaper database. Since the murder of Gianni Versace, we have been monitoring occurrences in the press of the word "frock". We felt that it had come into relative prominence since his death, and were wondering whether this was purely temporary or the start of a new linguistic vogue. Since we needed a base level for purposes of comparison, we monitored the occurrences of "frock" over each of the past few months. Here are the monthly totals since December:

Frock	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
	124	126	104	102	90	135	157

Throughout 1996, frocks had been running at about 120 a month, and as these figures show, that rate was maintained in January. But the next three months showed a marked decline, followed by sudden and dramatic rises in May and June. The June 1997 figure is, in fact, the highest ever recorded for a calendar month. And if we were to plot these figures on a graph, it would look just like the read-out from the device used on the Paul McKenna show. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that precognition is an exact science – with hindsight.

The games page is edited by William Hartston

Chess William Hartston



The endgame study composer Gennrich Kasparian, who died last year, was one of the strongest players of all problemists. (Many very strong players have composed the occasional fine problem, but few top-class problemists have had much of a playing career.) Perhaps this is why so many of his compositions have that light touch that appeals to players as well as purists. The position above is a good example. It is White to play and win.

At first glance, it looks simple: get the bishop out of the way and promote the pawn to a queen next move. But things are not so simple. After the natural 1.Bg6 (or 1.Bh5) Black plays 1...Rb8+ 2.Ka7 Bd4+. Now 3.Bxb6 is forced, when 3...Bxb6+ 4.Ka6 looks, and is, good for White. But Black plays instead 3...Rxb6! and after 4.e8Q+ Kc7 the threat of Rb8+ guarantees Black a draw. The white queen has no good square from which to give check.

But if moving the bishop out of the way doesn't work, how is White to make progress? If this were a lesser composer's work, the answer might begin with 1.Rxc6+ dxc6 2.Bxc6, but Kasparian would not do anything so crude. Black draws easily with 2...Rb8+ 3.Ka7 Bd4+ with Kc7 to come.

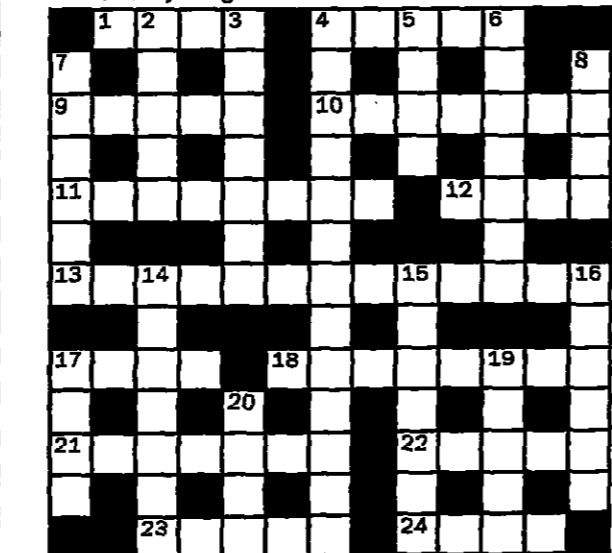
So what about trying to get the bishop out in the other direction? 1.Rd2 looks promising: the threat is 2.Bxd7+ and the rook also puts paid to that troublesome check from the bishop on d4. Again, however, Black has an ingenious defence: after 1.Rd2 he plays 1...Rxb5! 2.Bxd7+ Kc7 and the threat of mate on a5 saves the game for him.

Finally, 1.Bxd7+ Kxd7 2.Bxc6+ looks tempting, but fails against 2...Rxc6! 3.Rxc6 Kxe7 with a draw. So what's the answer? The first idea was correct, but you have to pick the right square for the bishop. Try 1.Bf7! Rb8+ 2.Ka7 Bd4+ 3.Bb6. Now after 3...Rxb6 4.e8Q+ Kc7 White plays 5.Ra2! (where the rook is now protected by the bishop) Rb8+ 6.Ka6 Rb6+ 7.Ka5 and White wins.

The real point of the study, however, is seen after 3...Bxb6+ 4.Ka6 Bd8! Black threatens mate, but White gets there first with 5.Rxc6+! dxc6 6.Bc6+ Kc7 7.e8=N mate! Bravo.

Concise crossword

No.3373 Saturday 9 August



- ACROSS**
- Seven days (4)
 - County (5)
 - Composition (5)
 - Whitewash (5-2)
 - Additional work (8)
 - Way out (4)
 - Darling (13)
 - Of great size (4)
 - Australian state (8)
 - Windpipe (7)
 - Oxford college (5)
 - Stretched tight (5)
 - Prophet (4)
- DOWN**
- Follow (5)
 - Rare gas (7)
 - Expel from church (13)
 - Rescue (4)
 - Copies (7)
 - City of Romeo and Julie (6)
 - Precise location (4)
 - Tramp (7)
 - Choices (7)
 - Annually (6)
 - Detest (4)
 - Elevate (5)
 - Part of leg (4)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Chateau, 5 Wring (Shattering), 8 Ratio, 9 Jericho, 10 Lenses, 11 Idyll, 12 Bleach, 14 Agreed, 17 Coyote, 19 Mongrel, 22 Morocco, 23 Views, 24 Sinal, 25 Holster. DOWN: 1 Car, 2 Artiste, 3 Evolve, 4 Unjust, 5 Working, 6 Ichby, 7 Growled, 12 Becomes, 13 Council, 15 Earnest, 16 Smooth, 18 Yards, 20 Novel, 21 Loser.

Bridge Alan Hiron

East-West game: dealer South

North		South	
♠ J 5		♠ 10 9 8 6 3 2	
♥ K 5 2		♥ 3	
♦ 6 4 2		♦ J 8 7 3	
♣ A Q 10 7 6		♣ K 4	
West		East	
♠ K 7 4		♠ 10 9 8 6 3 2	
♥ Q J 9 8 7 6		♥ 3	
♦ K 9 5		♦ J 8 7 3	
♣ 4 3		♣ K 4	

South spotted the danger that might have upset his contract of Three No-trumps on this deal and made an effort to bypass it. However, he did not choose the right line of play and still went down. Can you spot his mistake? South opened One No-trump (16-18 points) and West overcalled with Two Hearts. He had a lucky escape when North

Perplexity

Literary confusion:

Ghastly fat whores jog nasty here

We are looking for the name of a famous author and the title of his or her perhaps most celebrated work. And all you have to do to find them is unjumble the letters in the above sentence.

Last we misled, we should like to make it clear that apart from having the same letters, there is no intended connection between

raised his partner to game instead of doubling and taking a substantial penalty.

West led ♠Q against 3NT and, not wanting to give East the lead if it could possibly be avoided, declarer won in dummy and played the ace and another club, rejecting the finesse. He did not mind West getting in and now had the extra chance of dropping the king of clubs. East won the second club, however, and switched to spades. The finesse lost, West cleared the suit, and now South could not come to more than eight tricks.

South was quite right to be apprehensive of a spade lead from East, but he missed a neat play. It is perfectly all right – indeed, a good idea – to cash the ace of clubs, but when the king does not fall, declarer should finesse the queen of diamonds. West may well be able to win, but now any continuation gives South plenty of time to establish and cash nine tricks.

the answer and the meaning of the sentence itself.

A prize of the Chambers 21st Century Dictionary will be awarded to the sender of the first correct answer we open on 21 August. Answers to Perplexity, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

Answers and the winner's name of the Perplexity competition that appeared on 26 July are held over until next week.

Backgammon Chris Bray

Those seeking to study the history of backgammon are confronted with a difficult problem. There is no definitive history of the game, which can trace its antecedents back some 5,000 years. The very first backgammon book of the modern era, appropriately entitled *The Backgammon Book* by Jacoby & Crawford (ISBN 0 14046260 0) does have a brief but excellent history of the game as its first section. The other useful reference book is H J R Murray's *A History of Board Games other than Chess* which notes that the first recorded use of the word backgammon was in 1645.

The *Backgammon Book* traces the game from its murky origins in Mesopotamia, through the Egyptian Pharaohs, the Greeks – the tedium of the siege of Troy was lightened by playing an early form of the game – and the Romans. The Emperor Claudius is said to have written a book on the game!

The game's route into Europe is obscured by time although the Roman Empire obviously played some part. It is mentioned in old English glossaries of the eighth and ninth centuries but its great popularity apparently dates from the Crusades whereafter it became known as Tables. A backgammon board was found on the wreck of the Mary Rose.

Different versions of the game can still be found around the world varying from the US Navy's Acety-Decoy to Greece's Tavli. The modern version of the game gained new life and immense popularity in the 1920s when some enterprising gamesman in one of the New York clubs came up with the idea of the doubling cube. The first laws of the game were drafted in 1931 at the New York Racquet & Tennis Club.

The *Backgammon Book* also contains some excellent photographs and prints of early artefacts and boards and more recent paintings from European archives. Like many backgammon books of the early 1970s the book is currently out of print but it is well worth checking your local second-hand bookshop for a copy, and you can occasionally find a copy in a public library.

On a more modern note, Malcolm Pein of Chess & Bridge Ltd. informs me that they now stock all versions of Jellyfish and are willing to give demonstrations or to send a demo disk free of charge to anyone who requests it. They can be contacted at 369 Euston Road, London NW1 3AR. Tel: 0171-388-2404.

Late bloomer



Julia Kaminski
talks to
GERALDINE JAMES

Rose strides towards me along the street on impossibly long, black-stockinged legs. At least, it looks like Rose, the reformed hooker in *Band of Gold* – shaggy curls, incy-wincy skirt, spiky heels – but the woman who offers me a makeshift seat on the pavement (“In the shade, if you don’t mind, I can’t go near the sun”) sounds rather more like Sarah Layton, the awfully nice colonel’s daughter in *Jewel in the Crown*. In fact, Geraldine James is neither Nice Sarah nor Flawed Rose, although she can identify with both. “It’s a very short step from Rose to me,” she explains over lunch later. “In fact, sometimes I think there’s no step at all.”

James, in Manchester to film an autumn sequel to the Bradford prostitutes’ drama *Band of Gold*, is taller and skinnier than you’d expect, especially if you’re watching the current repeats of *Jewel*, set in 1940s India, in which her Sarah is a solidly built, plain girl with a strong line in very proper dresses and suppressed sexuality.

“When we were filming *Jewel*, in the mid-Eighties, it was only 40 years after the setting of the series, and I could sort of feel Sarah across the time gap. So much had happened to women, and here we all were, going ‘Yes, Sarah Layton, hey, we’re with you-o-o’, whereas at the time she felt completely isolated, mad, and wrong, and bad, but she couldn’t speak up for herself because she was in that world that said ‘Tup! Not a word’. You’re female, you don’t question things. They think she’s being difficult if she doesn’t smile and want to play tennis every afternoon.”

If there’s one thing that James does not share with Sarah Layton, it is diffidence. She talks 20 to the dozen, a breathless stream, without full-stops or commas. “Sarah has flashes of humour, but most of the time that’s completely repressed, and it was fascinating to play it. When I saw the repeats, I was startled – I didn’t remember that I was so uptight and anxiously retentive, but I think I based it on Celia Johnson in *Brief Encounter*.”

Did she look like Sarah then? “She was meant to be spectacularly plain, but I think the make-up person went a little far!”

India, where she also filmed *Gandhi*, was a rich experience for James. The people were “absolutely fantastic.”

“One waiter in the hotel where we were staying took us all to his mum’s for dinner one night. We went to weddings. We went to Simla, which is this extraordinary place up in the mountains, very British, with the Gaiety Theatre or something like that with all these photos from the Forties of these English people doing plays as if they’d been in *Woking*.”

“But I was very frightened, too,” she recalls. “I was very insecure as an actress. There was Sarah in her time, with me, Geraldine, in the Eighties, going ‘You’re all right’, but I was thinking ‘I can’t do this. I’m no good, I’m hopeless’. Now, 15 years later, I wish I’d had that extra iota of confidence that I now have, so I could have gone, ‘I can play this part!’”

This is a recurring theme: her lack of faith in herself, even now at 46. Why did she continue to act if, even in her thirties, she felt she couldn’t do it?

“But I still think I can’t do it,” she wails. “The only reason I think I less – and this is absolutely, genuinely true – is I’m doing it and I now have a backlog of work. I can feel a little quieter in my soul. And it also matters less than when I was in my thirties. And nobody can tell me I’m not going to be an actress, because I have been an actress. I can go before my maker and say ‘I was an actor’, – this in an emphatic voice, presumably one kept specially for addressing one’s maker – “and I can say ‘I’ve brought a few videos’.”

“I have taken risks in my life, like playing Rose. I honestly thought when that series came out that I would be laughed out of the country.”

Fears that she was miscast dogged her at the beginning, in the same way that Sarah had felt out of place in the world of the Raj.

“I thought people would go ‘This is ridiculous, this girl is middle-class, how can she possibly play this creature, who does she think she is? I mean, listen to her!’” *Scorn drips* from these words convincingly. “I honestly thought people would think that, and instead they went ‘Yeah, gosh,’ and so a little bit of me went ‘Phew! I’ve got away with it again!’” Surely she doesn’t feel like this every time? “I do. I think ‘This time I won’t be able to do it, this time I’m going to miss the diving board and go off in the shallow end and there won’t be any water in it anyway. I’m going to completely land on my face!’”

To James, the crucial thing about *Band of Gold* is that it must be believable, and must not



Geraldine James: ‘I honestly thought when “Band of Gold” came out that I would be laughed out of the country’
PHOTOGRAPH: ROB BODMAN / NTM

knife out... no wonder the girls fear for their lives. They have such low self-esteem. In my experience, almost all of these women have been abused. So they already think of themselves as complete rubbish. The fact that they go off with a man who starts hitting them around somehow fits in with their lives.”

James is most scathing of the pimps who lure young schoolgirls into the game. Having a 12-year-old daughter, Eleanor, brings it sharply into focus for her. “That whole pimp thing is so disgusting. They’ll seduce very young girls literally by giving them sweets. Buying them nice clothes. Encouraging them, developing their sexuality when they’re far too young.”

Did it strike a chord when her character Rose discovered, in the second series, that her estranged daughter was a hooker? “I could imagine what it was like for Rose. But I don’t relate it to Eleanor very much. I did get very alarmed on one location when we were filming outside a junior school, and somebody said ‘This is where pimps will identify their likely candidates, and start working on them.’ Now if they’re strong, secure children with loving families, then they’re not going to be taken in by that – I hope.”

Does Eleanor feel insecure, with her mother away so often? “Well, it does get tougher for her as she gets older, because she’s more aware. When she was a baby, I didn’t work until she was about 15 months old, and by the time I went back to work I was going up the wall. I realised, there’s a bit of me that is nourished by acting, which is kept at bay when I’m at home being a mum. It’s phenomenal to do both, but I can’t choose.”

The actress in James was born at boarding school in Berkshire, where she felt miscast. “Very early on there were the girls who were good at singing, at the arts, or mathematics or languages, and I wasn’t good at anything. I didn’t shine. So I became the clown in order to have an identity and at the age of 13 they put me into acting. I had a fabulous teacher, my headmistress’s husband, who taught Shakespeare for A-level, and then I found this person called William Shakespeare and a play called *King Lear*. The teacher took us to see it at Stratford and I remember Eric Porter, Alan Howard, Michael Williams and being completely blown away by it. I worked with Eric Porter on *Jewel in the Crown* and I remember sitting opposite him and I couldn’t believe that he was there. Eric Porter, who had been my major inspiration, with these incredibly long, beautiful hands, and I remember being mesmerised by these hands and just wanting to say to him ‘I’m here today because of you’. He was wonderful.”

As *Jewel in the Crown* draws to its conclusion at the end of August, Nice Sarah will disappear, to be replaced by Rose, as *Gold* (the third series of *Band of Gold*) is screened in October. In the meantime, Geraldine will retire to her “little house” in Sussex with Eleanor and her husband Jo Blatchley, a film producer and director at Rada. After *Gold*, James will reappear on screen in a new series of *Kavanagh QC*, scheduled for next January. “My opposing character to Rose is my wonderful QC in *Kavanagh*, Helena Harker. She has a very extraordinary, lateral-thinking mind, she does these great loops in her head. I read it and get mentally exhausted and to play somebody who has that mental agility... it’s great. I like her very much.”

It’s some time since she appeared on stage, and she’s itching to return. “I want to do theatre; I really, really want to do some more, because I miss it. It’s been difficult because there have been things I’ve had to do personally, that have meant it’s quite hard to commit to a long time in the theatre, but next year I will, I’ll find something and do it. You feel you’re really stretching yourself in the theatre.”

“I don’t like doing what I’ve already done. But there’s a lot of different kinds of characters that I’d like to play. More comedy, more classical theatre, more European theatre, more movies. I’d love to play a character close to myself in a film... because then it’s about revealing, rather than about putting on a character. I try to only do jobs I don’t know how to do. I did *Moll Flanders* although I thought it was not remotely interesting, but Morgan Freeman was going to be in it, and I thought ‘Christ, I would love to work with Morgan Freeman’. I didn’t particularly want to do *Portia in The Merchant of Venice* until I saw Dustin Hoffman was in it.”

Some “extraordinary, exotic” people came to see *The Merchant of Venice*, she says. “Robert De Niro came to see it in London, and he’d just got off the plane, and Dustin was in a terrible state because De Niro was in, and I thought I was being rather marvellous, which is a dangerous thing to ever think. I knew where he was sitting and I just glanced up to see if I was being appreciated by the great De Niro and he was” – she throws back her head, closes her eyes and opens her mouth – “sound asleep.”

glamorise prostitution. The first series divided police opinion in the Bradford area, where it is set, between those who felt it increased public awareness, and those who felt it encouraged kerk-crawling and possibly even tempted young women into prostitution, believing it to be glamorous.

“This programme must be authentic. It isn’t *Dynasty*, it’s about life on the streets, and if people can see it and believe us and think ‘That’s what these women are like’, they may change their attitudes. Many people dismiss and loathe prostitutes, they think they’re the scum of the earth. If we can say they’re human beings, and understand what may have led them towards this life and be a little less judgemental, and please can

we also talk about the gentlemen who need to use these women’s services...”

“It has completely changed my own views. I think in some awful way I had a romanticised view of it. I thought it would be easier to play than it is. Within about a week we were wearing these costumes – you have a bit of you that you’re selling yourself on, my bit was my legs and my tits [goodness me, that Nice Sarah would never say “tits”], so they had to be fairly well exposed, and that’s fine when you’re acting, but when they go ‘Lunch!’ you’re still exhibiting yourself and we found that you just get looked at. That was very startling, to realise what it would be like, for me,” she emphasises, “not to be in control of how I present myself.”

Researching Rose brought James into contact with prostitutes in Bradford’s Lumb Lane red-light area where she heard all the gruesome details of life on the streets.

“We see them at home making a cup of tea and saying ‘Christ, it’s tough out there’ and we realise what it would be like to work in those clothes, in winter, getting into hot cars for 10 minutes and getting thrown out again having made 10 quid, stuffing it into your bra and wandering on to the next street corner. Somebody turns up who is deeply repellent physically, and smells, and wants you to do appalling things, and you’re so cold you do it. It ain’t a glamorous life by any means. “You are completely vulnerable; if he whips a

Another circus skill gets shot down

An unlikely victim of the government’s ban on handguns has come to light. The new legislation turns out to be a body blow to circus performers, and will end a tradition dating back to the kinds of acts made famous in Buffalo Bill’s *Wild West Show* in the last century. Leading big top proprietor Bobby Roberts Junior, whose current touring summer show involves him juggling and twirling revolvers, is calling for an exemption for performing artists in this week’s issue of *The Stage*.

As things stand, all performers who use pistols and revolvers over 22 calibre in their acts must hand them in by the end of next month, or face prosecution for possessing prohibited weapons. So it’s either a case of Parliament having to make a last minute exemption, or roll up, roll up for the fantastic Bobby

Roberts Junior and his amazing twirling water pistols.

That other leading big top man Gerry Cottle will need a room to himself if he hands over his arms to the government. Cottle’s latest show *The Circus of Horrors* includes flick knives, band guns, a machine-gun and a flame-thrower. “It’s not live ammunition,” he exploded as I kept my eye warily on his holster. “This takes all the excitement out of circuses. First we have to lose our animals, now our guns. We’re becoming a laughing stock with the rest of the world.”

It all does seem rather ridiculous. *Guns in the context of circuses* and indeed stage plays are akin to start-



David Lister
arts notebook

ing pistols – a prop, dramatic but harmless. And it should not be beyond Home Office bureaucracy to exempt not only circuses but all performing arts from the new laws.

Only once can I recall a circus

prop of this sort being remotely dangerous. It was actually in Gerry Cottle’s own circus some years ago. A now deceased and much loved cowboy juggled guns, threw knives and had a drink problem. By the time of the evening show his aim would grow increasingly erratic. We shall not duck from his like again.

Surreal tales reach me of Andrew Lloyd Webber’s annual jamboree at Sydmonton. Each summer, Lord Lloyd Webber throws open his Berkshire stately home to assorted friends for a preview of his latest opus. But this year there was more than a scene from *Whistle Down the Wind* on offer. Guests were surprised to be asked to

take part in a mock-Parliamentary debate on the future of Europe. Well, not so mock actually. A room at Sydmonton was designed as a mini House of Commons; Norman Tebbit was one of the speakers, and the Speaker, Betty Boothroyd, was acting out her day job.

Outside, the guests sat on the lawn to listen to Rowan Atkinson give a talk on his passion, fast cars. Here, it turned out, smoking could be a hazard. Some of Lord Lloyd Webber’s musical friends do have rather important voices to tend after all. David Frost lit up only to have a note passed to him which read: “Dave, put that cigarette out. Now! Love, Kiri.”



Here’s a job description to moisten the eye. “Practically no responsibilities. Just occasionally signing a letter or two that someone else has written for you. Honey-sweet relations with the dear, friendly trustees... Above all, abundant opportunity to get on with your own work and no need to hide it under the blotting paper when you have callers.” That serene piece of nostalgia was

uncovered by the *Museums Journal*. It was from an article written in the 1950s by Thomas Kendrick, then director of the British Museum. Worries over whether to charge, cuts in purchase grant and a host of other problems seem to make managing a major arts institution a little trickier these days. No leisure, no blotting paper, and are there honey-sweet trustees for tea?

arts & books

India at 507
Holroyd's definitive8
Shaw8
American poetry8
Fiction on the front line6



All aboard the festival express

The Edinburgh Festival opens its 50th birthday season this weekend. In an extract from his new novel, 'No Laughing Matter', Peter Guttridge savours the flavour of life on the festival gravy train

Bridget Frost and I were both going up to the Edinburgh Festival. The Bitch of the Broadbeats, Bridget was loud, pushy, opinionated, grudge-bearing, drunken, vindictive and tacky, but she had her good points. Actually, those were her good points.

She was doing some stuff on the Fringe, which this year was bigger than ever, with around 10,000 performers and 1,200 shows. They were the kind of statistics you got in the press pack. The press office had fun expressing figures in colourful ways: for example, if all the Fringe groups formed a human tower by standing on each other's shoulders, they would exceed the height of the world's tallest building by 14 kilometres. Well, yes, I do find that interesting.

I was going by train, Bridget by plane. Depending on your point of view, four hours on a train in the company of a bunch of writers may or may not count as a good time. But, if you're freelance, you don't turn down a free first-class return ticket when it's on offer. The Edinburgh Book Festival had two first class carriages, stacked with free food and booze, reserved for London's literary folk on a Scotland-bound Intercity 225 leaving King's Cross.

The trip was intended to be a party. My ticket even had a "plus guest" on it. But I was travelling alone. Sad, eh? I had thought of inviting Bridget to travel with me but putting her in a sealed carriage with a bunch of literary types was like giving the fox a den in the henhouse. Fortunately, she preferred flying.

I've always found it best to keep booze away from writers. The history of drunkenness in literature teaches us that it's the poets you have to watch, but children's authors can be pretty tricky too. I envisaged that the combination of free drink and artistic temperament meant friendships springing up by Peterborough could be legendary feuds by York.

The trip was, however, sadly uneventful. People table-hopped along the aisles. A couple of film crews for those cable channels that no one ever watches shot footage with the look of people in whom hope was battling with experience. PRs ferried journalists to and from the handful of celebrity authors. As the bottles of wine and whisky circulated, things got a little raucous but, as an attractive American woman pointed out to a group at the table next to mine, there was no shagging in the aisles.

The train was on time into Waverley Station. A tall, strapping man in his fifties was standing on the platform in a kilt and sporran, as if to assure us we were indeed in Scotland. I immediately assumed he was a laird, whatever one of those was, but I overheard someone else saying he played the bagpipes on street corners for loose change. When I looked closer, I saw that, although he had a kilt tucked down one stocking, the effect was spoiled by the quarter-bottle of whisky tucked down the other. That evening I went into Charlotte

Square to the Book Festival, Edinburgh was undergoing an untypical beatwave and the tents in which the festival took place had their doors open to let in air on the sweating hordes within. I listened from the doorway as Joanna Trollope and Michael Dobbs, looking slightly indignant, defended TV adaptations of their works.

I went into the spiegeltent, a wonderful 1920s Austrian beer tent, and sat with my beer in one of the wood and glass booths around the outer rim. Sipping my drink, I looked through the Fringe brochure. Irvine Welsh was still hip and omnipresent. Six different versions of *Macbeth*. A musical history of Edinburgh's Royal Mile. Not my thing really. Oscar, the Hypnotising Dog, now that was more like it.

Half-a-dozen musicians were milling around on the small stage, fiddling with microphone stands and amplifiers. When they started up, a woman sitting a few yards away started getting into it - legs bobbing, fingers snapping, head shaking. I wouldn't have minded but it wasn't exactly the birth of the cool. Just a bunch of middle-management types in candy-striped waistcoats, beer guts and straw hats playing Diddieled. The woman clapped out of time.

Bridget slid into the booth beside me. "Been to any shows yet?"

"I've been down at the Film Festival," I said. "Got talking to a director from Iceland - probably the only director from Iceland - about a comedy he'd just made there. He told me it reflected the fact a good proportion of the people are suicidally depressed in winter, merely suicidal come spring and alcoholic all year round."

"Sounds a laugh a minute," Bridget chuckled at the musicians. "I've been to two. I don't understand why they always seem to put the noisy shows right next-door to the quiet ones, with only a cardboard partition between. They might as well put all the noisy shows together and let them fight it out like a psychotic Battle of the Bands."

"What'd you see?" "I saw a musical about Robert Burns. I thought I was seeing one about Rasputin but I went next-door by mistake. The accents of the actors were so thick it took me 20 minutes to realise. It was only when Rasputin started reciting a poem to a haggis, I twigged something was amiss. I'd thought the kilt was making a statement about universal experience."

The hand struck up another dire tune from the good old days of Dixie.

"They should be on a paddle steamer on the Mississippi," I said, grimacing. "Preferably one that's sinking. Why don't we go outside?"

Edited extract from 'No Laughing Matter' by Peter Guttridge, published in hardback at £16.99 by Headline Book Publishing and available from all bookshops, or by credit card - at the special discount price of £12.99 - from Bookpoint on 01235 400414 (lines open 9am-6pm Mon-Sat)



One from the heart

David Hare explains why Shaw's 1921 state-of-the-nation play is due for revival

In the confident days of post-war expansion, most theatre companies were able to rotate the same classic authors to make up a repertoire of plays which Ken Campbell

once wittily christened "brochure theatre". At your local playhouse you could expect to see Shakespeare playing in a regular team of writers who usually included Wilde, Ibsen and Arthur Miller. But more recently, as theatres have suffered from public underfunding and as the comfortable literary consensus which underpinned their choices has disappeared, so artistic directors have needed to adopt a bolder and more improvised approach to their job. Some famous writers have continued to thrive. Chekhov's four best-known plays are still relentlessly revived. But the most eminent victim of this enforced shake-down has been the problematic figure of George Bernard Shaw.

Sometimes it is as if we no longer quite know what to do with him. On the publication of the final volume of Michael Holroyd's brilliant three-part biography in 1992, several reviewers noted how unfortunate it was that the 15 years it had taken Holroyd to write the book had coincided with an irreversible decline in his subject's reputation. It would be hard, they insisted, to imagine a playwright more thoroughly out of fashion. Shaw was associated with an era of rational Fabianism which no longer spoke to the modern world. His plays, with their notorious long sentences and stately attitudes, embodied a fearful attitude to sex which our own more full-blooded age found spindly and immature. The characters were authorial moults - puppets, not people.

The playwright once described as "the creator of modern consciousness" had become a victim of the fact that he had so completely dominated his own time. He had, in short, been superseded.

If these reviewers had looked a little harder, they would have found that their supposed reassessments of Shaw more truly reflected the doubts which some audiences had enjoyed about his work from the beginning. The character of Bernard Shaw himself often commanded an interest and authority far wider than any of the individual plays he actually wrote. If *Heartbreak House* is, as its author suggested, his *Leah*, then it has to be said that from the outset it has suffered a far more mixed press than Shakespeare's greatest masterpiece. Billed, perhaps misleadingly, as a fantasia in the Russian manner on English themes, it played at the Royal Court in Shaw's own 1921 production at over four hours. Its length alone attracted a level of dismissive vituperation which Shaw's recent detractors could hardly hope to emulate. Shaw's attempts to mix high farce with divine tragedy, and to marble an apparent comedy of manners with grave presentiments of impending catastrophe have elicited an exasperation in some spectators which has never truly abated.

The purpose of reviving *Heartbreak House* just before the millennium (without altering or updating the text) is to take a timely look at the century's first and outstanding state-of-the-nation play, aware that it exhibits many of the characteristics of that extraordinary genre which has given modern British drama so much of its distinctive spirit.

By gathering together a collection of Bloomsbury-like bohemians in a Sussex house, Shaw appears to set off in a familiar Chekhovian direction, analysing the destiny of a country by portraying the life and loves of a representative group of middle-class people. He looks ahead to the coming century and sees it as no friendly place for romantics or adventurers, but belonging instead to a narrow new class of depressing capitalists who are determined to reduce life to its lowest common denominator. Who can say he was wrong? Yet even in this overall scheme, so uncannily prophetic about the world we now live in - Captain Shotover, for instance, is working on Ronald Reagan's Star Wars strategy, the weapon which will destroy all other weapons - there is a wildness of texture, a sheer strangeness of vision which is often so personal and peculiar that we may almost rub our ears, in danger of

disbelieving what we have heard. Many critics have rightly drawn attention to the zaniness of Shaw's humour. His playfulness with theatre itself is taken to prefigure the arrival of absurdist like Beckett and Ionesco. But less noticed, it seems, is Shaw's underlying steel. Under the surface of the play - which shifts around in the manner of all great, elusive work - lies the disturbing contention that it is not useful to try and be happy; that happiness, indeed, may be only a failure and a lure. Using a method of reversal which is notably Brechtian, Shaw reveals how easily the wish to enjoy life may slip into a deadly infatuation with dreams.

No wonder this uncomfortable portrait of a society in which people are habitually distracted from their better purposes is one which theatregoers have sometimes found hard to contemplate. But they have also not been helped by a view of the play which emphasises its frivolity and rhetoric at the expense of its deeper feelings. Far from the governing tone being either light-hearted or elegiac, it is, on the contrary, full of the feverishness of genuine despair. Underneath the banter, underneath the central story of a young girl growing up in the course of a single evening, lies a sense of wasted passion that belies Shaw's reputation as a cold or cerebral writer. "It has more of the miracle, more of the mystic belief in it than any of my others," wrote the author of his own favourite play. It also, he might have added, has more of the heart.

David Hare's production of *Heartbreak House* is at the Almeida Theatre, London N1, from 3 Sept to 11 Oct, previewing from Thursday. Booking: 0171-359 4404

David Hare (above, centre) in rehearsal with Richard Griffiths

GERAINT LEWIS

Edinburgh coverage



'What is this garbage about music being the highest art form?' The Independent's comprehensive coverage of this year's 51st Edinburgh Festival begins in the broadsheet on Monday when American choreographer Twyla Tharp explains her philosophy of dance to David Benedict.

Plus, for all the latest news and reviews from the International, Fringe and Film Festivals, see the daily Tabloid, Tuesday to Friday

Hayward Gallery
of the South Bank, London

LAST WEEKS

RHAPSODIES IN BLACK
ART OF THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

19 June - 17 August 1997

Cam - 8pm days
Tuesday and Wednesday 10pm 8pm
Ask Ghazwan, Tatsuo Miyajima: Big Time

0171 960 4242

Archibald J. Motley Jr

sbc

David Benedict WEEK IN REVIEW

David Benedict WEEK IN REVIEW		
THE PLAY	THE FILM	THE BALLET
Life Support	Bean	Romeo and Juliet
Once again, Alan Bates takes the leading role in a new play by Simon Gray. This time he stars as a fraudulent travel writer stung into grief as he attends the bedside of his wife (Georgina Hale) who lies in a coma. Harold Pinter, an old hand when it comes to directing Gray, is back in charge with Caroline Nannings, Nicholas Grace and Frank McCusker in supporting roles.	Rowan Atkinson breaks silence by adding his voice to a big-screen re-creation of his stuporously popular TV persona of the bumbling incompetent, serenely unaware of the chaos he creates around him. Older readers will recognise him as a graduate of the Harry Worth / Norman Wisdom school. Written by Richard (Four Weddings) Curtis and Robin Driscoll and directed by Mel Smith.	On Monday, the Kirov Ballet returned to the Coliseum with Larovsky's <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , added confirmation that they have triumphantly survived their post-Communist impoverishment. Aynay Asymuratova danced a yearningly fateful Juliet, with Viktor Baranov as her Romeo. It was the Queen Mum's 97th birthday; Mercutio's testosterone-drenched performance was an ideal gift.
Paul Taylor found it "moving, astute, often funny. (Alan Bates) does the author especially proud ... He superbly suggests a man struggling to master overwhelming grief". "One of Gray's finest, strongest exercises in sardonic tragedy, black comedy, categorise it how you will," <i>averred The Times</i> . "Grips throughout ... When Bates suddenly surges with anger, or succumbs to a devastating sense of loss, the dramatic effect is explosive," <i>gasped The Telegraph</i> . "Quietly moving if lacking in theatrical dynamism ... perversely, one sometimes sighs for a touch of the old talent to abuse," <i>admitted The Guardian</i> . "A tremendously moving, bed-bound performance by Georgina Hale ... a civilised rather than a memorable evening," <i>decided The Mail</i> .	Ryan Gilbey likened it to "Mr Magoos with added malice and mucus ... If the film has anything in its favour, it's brevity". "Bean is not an acquired taste, you either have it or not. You might, though, in a moment of doubt, or panic, try to unacquire it. For instance, after seeing this movie," <i>warned the FT</i> . "The kind of shallow movie that only works if you shut your mind to the qualities of all great comedies: rigour, intelligence, imagination and humanity," <i>thundered The Times</i> . "Highlights include pants wetting, eruptions of nasal snot and a bag of vomit burst playfully over someone's head." <i>shuddered The Standard</i> . "These gags are not so much cheap as bargain basement," <i>scorned the Telegraph</i> .	Louise Levene enthused about the production: "A stag-line of enormously promising young men ... Almost operatic staging gives the street scenes a verismo and vitality enhanced by the full-blooded dancing and zesty mime of the chorus," and she doted on Juliet's "exotic, tip-tilted beauty". "The Kirov's Koh-i-noor diamond has been their prima ballerina Aynay Asymuratova... Has any dancer ever been so completely gifted?" <i>gasped the Telegraph</i> . "Looks odd," <i>mused the FT</i> , which still had to concur, "At its heart was Aynay Asymuratova's Juliet, and she justified every moment. None of the other playing came near her."
At the Aldwych Theatre, London WC2 (0171-416 6003) to 18 Oct.	Cert PG, 89 mins. On release absolutely everywhere.	The Kirov end their UK visit with a second Fokine programme at the Coliseum, London WC2 (0171-632 8300) today at 2pm and 7.30pm.
Don't be put off by the seemingly bleak scenario. A fine production.	See <i>Grosse Pointe Blank</i> instead.	Highly recommended: lustful, erotic, passionate, delicately sensual and beautifully danced. Sorry you missed <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , but see Fokine if you can.

150 من المجلد



Playing for time

He sang before he could speak. He's been playing the piano since he could reach the keys. And some already place him in the pantheon of all-time keyboard greats. Now, at 26, Evgeny Kissin has been rewarded with the Proms' first ever solo recital. But first he plays a game of verbal chess with Edward Seckerson

When Evgeny Kissin was a year old (or so he's reliably informed), he stood up in his cot, pointed decisively at the piano, and uttered one word: "OPEN!" So any suggestion that this prodigy was shamelessly exploited can be quickly discounted. His parents were obedient. They hadn't planned things this way (sons grow up to be engineers like their fathers, don't they?). His mother played, his elder sister played. Evgeny listened. He was such a quiet child. (Didn't they realise he was listening?) He was no trouble. (Didn't they realise he was concentrating?) He sang before he could speak. Bach's A major Fugue. His sister was studying it at the time. (Didn't they realise he needed quiet to memorise it?) He was 11 months old. Not yet old enough to reach the keyboard. (A minor detail.) But time was pressing. And the initiative was his. "OPEN!" Like 1 say, his parents were obedient.

Kissin can't remember a time when he wasn't playing the piano. And he remembers everything. Total recall. At three-and-a-half (you see), the improvisations began. Anything he heard he could sing, and anything he sang he could play. At six his parents packed him off to the Gnessin School of Music for Gifted Children in Moscow. His teacher was (still is) Anna Pavlovna Kantor, who gave him a volume of Tchaikovsky, suggesting that he might begin work on three or four of the pieces. He memorised the lot. "He could play everything, but didn't know anything," she later said of him. "Meaning that the technical skills, the instinct, intuition, musicality - the elements - were already in place. Reason would follow."

Kissin made his concert debut at the age of 10 in Mozart's Piano Concerto K466. A year later he played his first solo recital in Moscow. Then came the big one. In March 1984, he performed both Chopin Piano Concertos in the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory with the State Philharmonic under Dmitri Kitarenko. The call went out around the world: "This kid is going to put Horowitz out of business." Herbert von Karajan beckoned from Berlin. The story goes that he was so entranced by the precocious 17-year-olds account of Tchaikovsky's B flat minor Concerto that he forgot to cue the flute's entry after the cadenza. Kissin is 26 now and some believe that a place has already been reserved for him in the pantheon of all-time keyboard greats. Mark Zilberquist, the American critic and author of *Great Russian Pianists*, was quoted as saying: "He is partly on earth and partly somewhere else. He was never a child prodigy, but a small genius. Now he is just a genius."

"Partly on earth and partly somewhere else..." Now there's a phrase that stays with you. There is something unearthly, other-worldly, about Kissin's appearance and demeanour. You see it first from afar, from your seat in the concert hall. The walk to the piano, the bow - lanky, awkward, diffident, as if the child has not quite grown into the man's body, as if that giant leap from childhood to manhood happened so fast that there simply wasn't time. And then he plays, and the awkwardness, the diffidence falls away, and there is total harmony - mind, body, spirit. Meeting Kissin - face to face - alters the perspective, but does little to dispel those first impressions. It's a child's face, an open face, with this shock of big hair which appears to have gone AWOL from a David Lynch movie. The smile is nervous but sincere, the manner charming but professional. He knows how to behave in an interview situation (as in: he'd rather be undergoing root canal work but doesn't show it), though it soon becomes apparent that the

process will be slow and painstaking, that to reach him, to understand him, will require one to probe beyond the concise, even cryptic, responses he at first volunteers, to coax and cajole, maybe even insist a little.

You begin with a concession of sorts. He is so plainly an intuitive musician, a born communicator, that talking about music must be difficult for him? "Very much so..." Long pause (whatever you do, don't jump in now or you'll kill the punchline)... "but not impossible." A half-smile, as if to say, "Well done, good start, you've got my number." And I have. Kissin is not an easy interviewee. His English is excellent: fluent, authoritative, only slightly accented. But he uses words sparingly (fair enough, it's his fingers that do the talking). And he thinks long and hard about which words. Sometimes they're not worth waiting for, other times they really hit the spot. It depends. The waiting can be unnerving, even frustrating, and on occasions your question may be met with a scowl or an irritated-sounding counter-thrust, which isn't rudeness, just concentration. Kissin likes to play chess. I'd say he exhibits a similar approach in conversation.

So you press him some more as to why it's so difficult for him to talk about music, and he gives you what, by his standards, is quite an expansive answer: "I feel a certain resistance. Music seems to me to speak so eloquently for itself that verbalising it sometimes feels pointless, even vulgar." So how does he imagine I feel having to do just that each and every working day? It's a light-hearted rebuke. He is unfazed. "It's quite different for critics and musicologists. My task is to present music as music, not as words..." Check, but not yet mate.

Kissin needs to play the piano almost as much as he wants to. Ask him if he feels he missed out on not having a "normal" childhood (a respiratory problem kept him from school long before his performing did) and his answer is "No, not at all, because sitting at the piano playing was what I wanted to do more than anything in the world." But how could he possibly have known, at two or three years of age? "I don't think I ever knew. It was an urge, purely instinctive." So playing the piano never felt like a substitute, the last refuge of a lonely child? Parental pressure was never brought to bear? Only to practice. He never enjoyed practice. He could happily play "all day long", but practice - that was something else. Now, of course, there is less of a distinction to be drawn. He practises - meaning he sits down to play - as much as he needs to. And he instinctively knows how much that is? "Yes, of course."

So how is it with performance? Does he know, does he instinctively know, when it's working, when the dots on the page begin taking on a life of their own? Leonard Bernstein always maintained that he could gauge precisely how well or otherwise a performance was going by the extent to which he felt he was composing the piece himself. Kissin can relate to that. He describes the feeling as one of total release, as if all your concerns - technical and otherwise - suddenly, mysteriously, evaporate and you are at ease, at one, with the piece.

"The element of improvisation is often present in my playing. Of course this depends on the repertoire. But this element is often present, and in such moments when I feel especially inspired, when everything is falling into place, it is present to an even higher degree..." And so a piece like Schumann's C major Fantasy - that most exalted song of love and longing from Robert to Clara (check out Kissin's RCA recording) - becomes his song, caught (or

so it would seem) in the moment of creation, in the playing of it. And when that happens, when Kissin is flying, we all get sucked into the jet stream.

But how about when it doesn't happen? How about the occasions (and there must be some) when the force is simply not with him? What then? Engage automatic pilot? Some critics have suggested that Kissin's prodigious technique can be a handicap, that knowing he can rely upon it takes the imperative out of his playing. "I cannot rely on anything unless I prepare well," he replies, in a manner redolent of an official statement. But he has taken the point. And he has a story to tell. Ten years ago, while on tour in Japan with the Moscow Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra and their violinist/conductor Vladimir Spivakov, he "didn't play as well as he should have". After the concert, Spivakov came to his room to ask what had happened. "I explained that my mood was all wrong, that I just couldn't find a way into the music. And he said something that has stayed with me ever since. He said, 'A real artist must be able to create the right mood for himself.'"

So he never knowingly coasts the music, never knowingly goes along for the ride. Some performances yield more than others: unexpected details, different inflections, voicings, colours, a unique atmosphere. Some performances simply provide more answers than others. How does that feel? "Very nice." Just "very nice"? What if it's a special moment: do you think about it afterwards, analyse it, seek to preserve it? "Difficult to say..." And here comes another of those interminable pauses for thought, here comes the scowl, the shifty silence. He starts to form a sentence but stops. You want to help him out but you know not to. He's focusing. This reply will be worthy of Gary Kasparov... "I'm not even sure that I always remember those moments. As far as preserving them is concerned, well, as long as I preserve my love for the music and that in turn inspires me in performance, then those things will keep happening by themselves. Which doesn't

mean," he adds in a rare burst of animation, "that everything that's good about my playing happens spontaneously. Not at all. I always have a clear plan in my head of how I'm going to play. But I often have to make things sound spontaneous. That is, of course, different from when something just comes to me unexpectedly during a performance. Both elements are important and necessary."

But can the one overwhelm the other? Am I alone in thinking that his live 1993 recording of the Rachmaninov Third (*Shine* with the notes, as Nicholas Kenyon quipped at his Proms press conference) sounds oddly calculated, a young man's self-conscious attempt to play down, even subdue, the virtuosic elements - to be awfully grown up about the piece? A young man with something to prove? "Not at all. I played it, and I still play it, in the way that I feel it." But less self-consciously? "I think it's a mistake to treat it as a showpiece." And so do I, but I find it hard to believe that your performance - or rather your view - of the piece hasn't changed since then? "You rightly corrected yourself: my performance must have changed but my view hasn't." Checkmate, I think.

Tomorrow afternoon, Kissin becomes the first pianist ever to give a solo recital at the Proms. On a podium which will place him right at the heart of the action - that is, in the arena, in the bosom of the promenaders - Kissin will play a programme of Haydn, Liszt and Chopin. The Chopin pieces - the Two Nocturnes, Op 27, and the Sonata No 3 in B minor - are among his most favourite in all music. He can't explain why. He is reluctant to try. I probe. Could it be the solitary nature of this music (private passions secretly indulged in public)? Could there perhaps be something about the man (he has dutifully devoured the letters) that he secretly identifies with? "I think if I could express why it is I love Chopin so much, then it would not be love but something else... Maybe one day a psychoanalyst will discover why. But, for now, it's too personal a feeling to want

to analyse. I simply can't say..." Any more than he can say what it is about 18th-century French painting and Italian opera (yes, even Verdi, particularly Verdi) that he so dislikes. Kissin is full of surprises. He likes walking. And you're purring in agreement - "Ah, yes, long country walks..." - when he adds, "fast walks in cities".

He reckons if he weren't a musician he would either be a journalist or a tour guide. How so? Exploration. Discovery. Different places, different cultures, different languages. Just like music. "And as tour guide you are showing the same things to different people, over and over again. And you have to keep them interested. Just like playing..."

He sometimes plays for friends. Just for friends. It's the nearest he gets to those solitary childhood days when he played just for pleasure. Does he ever feel that the audience is an intrusion, that even one listener is too many? "NEVER." (The emphasis he places on that one word speaks volumes.) "I play for those who come to listen to me. My audiences are an inspiration to me. And if they are not, then it's usually my fault. It's my business to keep them interested and attentive..."

A minute or two pass. The conversation has moved on... "Please, I would like to add something... Because I love the music I play so much, I want to share it with my audiences. In no way are they an intrusion." Another "official statement". Just to make sure. But it really isn't necessary. Among Kissin's press cuttings is the story of a recital in Bologna where fire officers were forced to turn off the electricity at midnight after his 13th encore. His Prom is at 3pm. John Eliot Gardiner and the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique are due on at 7.30.

Evgeny Kissin at the Proms: 3pm tomorrow, Royal Albert Hall, London SW7 (0171-589 8212) and live on BBC Radio 3. Kissin's new recording of Beethoven's Piano Concertos Nos 2 & 5 is released this week on Sony Classical (SK 62926)



NAUMANT LANTIERA

JEAN RENO

"This is a brilliant film and you'll laugh until you cry"

NEW WOMAN

FILM OF THE MONTH

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

MAKES CLAIM

ROSEANNA'S GRAVE

MERCEDES RUEHL

"A life affirming comedy to see after a bad day at the office"

ELLE

NOW SHOWING

AND AT SELECTED CINEMAS ACROSS THE COUNTRY AUGUST 22

ODEON KENSINGTON 0181 315 4214

ODEON SWISS COTTAGE 0181 315 4220

ODEON RICHMOND 0181 315 4215

ODEON CAMDEN 0181 315 4225

TALKING PAGES 0800 600 900

415 3323 FOR FREE DETAILS

'Shaand, 1957' from 'Marc Riboud in China: forty years of photography' (Thames & Hudson, £35)
PHOTOGRAPH: MARC RIBOUD/MAGNUM

House of the spirits

Is fiction closer to astrology or history?
Justin Wintle
balances hard fact
and heavenly fancy
in two far-eastern
family sagas



The Bondmaid by Catherine Lim, Oriel, £5.99;
One Thousand Chestnut Trees by Mira Stout,
Flamingo, £16.99

Some years ago, returning from the Far East, I had a peculiar experience in Hatchard's, the London bookseller. Standing in front of the fiction table, anxious to discover what everyone had been up to in my absence but still debilitated by dysentery, with my head therefore lighter than a Kyoto parasol, lighter even than a Javan firefly's fitful evanescence, an apparitional thought welled up. Fiction is of the same order as astrology. Like astrologists, novelists seek to impose their make-believe on an unsuspecting public according to rules they themselves have fabricated. So why take what they write so seriously? As I re-immersed myself in literary culture, this seductive insight receded. Yet, asked to review Catherine Lim, I was reminded of that moment of enlightenment. Is this a criticism of *The Bond-*

maid? I hope not. Rather, it is to draw attention to the remarkable skill of its Singaporean author. The story she tells is conventional enough, by occidental as well as oriental standards. A tiny girl, Han, is sold by her impoverished mother to a Mandarin family. The fortunes of the House of Wu, however, hang precariously by a single thread: the young master, just two years older than Han.

What follows is fatal-attraction chop suey. The two children form an inseparable attachment that their elders, employers and servants do everything in their power to stymie. At length the young master is sent away. He returns a "scholar", fit for betrothal to Li-Li, the ornamental daughter of the even more prestigious House of Gheng. The main line of the House of Wu will be spared, at least for another generation.

But inevitably the bond between the young master and the serving girl reasserts itself. Neither Han's beauty, nor her craving, can remain forever cloaked by her plain garments. And if the reader

has a strong premonition of the unhappy dénouement, then – allowing for a few strange twists – that premonition is likely to prove correct.

In fiction, as in cuisine, it is the sauce with the meat that satisfies. *The Bondmaid* is decked out, upstairs and downstairs, with a gallery of characters finely balanced between stereotype and individuality: a sybaritic great-grandfather, for example, now confined to his bed and attended by his vengeful servant Chu; a matriarch who cannot properly sustain her own stern code; a head bondmaid, the sour spinster Choyin, who willingly sustains it for her; an imbecile called Spitface. A whole gamut of deftly painted human props is here.

Even the ever-wifful Han is – for anyone familiar with, say, Gong Li in *Raise the Red Lantern* – a recognisable type. What animates and humanises Lim's puppets is their superstition. The priest aside, all imagine themselves to be in thrall to gods and spirits. The drama of the protagonists is shadowed by a contest between the near-omnipotent

Sky God and the lesser Forgetful Goddess.

Catherine Lim doesn't for a moment suppose the spirit world exists outside of human hopes and fears, but inside, they are real enough. Hers is a version of the Chinese in Singapore set in a semi-recent past untroubled by the Japanese invasion or the Malay Emergency. The only historical alignment is with the present, when we discover that the Wu estate has become a petrochemical plant. Even so, *The Bondmaid* surpasses the pulp paperback market earmarked by its publisher.

I cared less for *One Thousand Chestnut Trees*, mainly because it seems chronically undecided as to what it wants to be other than the Korean counterpart of Jung Chang's unmatchable *Wild Swans*. A young woman, of mixed Korean and Irish-American parentage, leaves New York for some Seoul-searching in her mother's native land. She pieces together a family history which, being determined by the deadliest 20th-century conflicts, is woeful enough. The narrative is split between three

voices: the young woman's, her mother's and her grandfather's, and the result issued as a novel.

That classification becomes increasingly arbitrary. The voices blur and there are too many passages of lacklustre travel reportage, including mandatory shopping and foodie paragraphs. Large chunks of Korean history are recycled on flat tyres.

Mira Stout's real concern, in what I suspect is a thinly veiled family memoir, is the mother-daughter relationship. To appease her mother the girl undertakes to visit the chestnuts of the title, a grove planted on a mountain near the border with North Korea to screen a family shrine from soldiers. But although she is foiled by the weather, somehow the journey achieves its objective.

A determined push, and Mira Stout might have got there. Despite an enviable gift for natural description, she has difficulty in shaping her material. Writing novels may indeed be an arcane practice, but for all that a strict one too. How hard the subject-matter presses is incidental.

Fiction on the front line

Good prose, pity about the poetry,
says Philippa Gregory

Parimony by Jane Thynne,
Fourth Estate, £9.99

The trick of any sort of whodunit or who-is-it novel is the sly revelation of clues to the reader without blowing the plot altogether. Equally, if one is to create any faith in the hero, then he or she has to be at least one jump ahead. In the case of *Parimony* the reader is bellowing "Look Behind you!" from about page 150, but the heroine remains stubbornly unaware. Heavy breathing on her answer phone, four burglaries which no one reports to the police, the disappearance of a colleague, all fail to disturb our heroine with the notion that something is up.

What is up is the slow uncovering of a secret history of a World War One poet, a contemporary of Sassoon and Owen. Disastrously, his poetry is quoted in the novel: "He vowed to serve his country / For King and common good / But no pledge prepared him for the foe he met / Stumbling out there in the mud / Advice to all non-poet authors: never invent poetry and hail it as great literature. The exception to this rule is Antonia Byatt.

This flaw is compounded as the plot hinges on our heroine correctly identifying other newly-discovered poetry as the ghastly doggerel of the poet's talentless daughter:

Like the barrel of a gun in the hand of a spy
The sun regards us with a dispassionate eye
We're in the unambiguous world of After
Where the cloudless landscape doesn't lie.

Well, search me, but I thought that they were both equally awful and thus no clue at all.

Thynne's ear for her own prose is erratic. There is some genuinely fine writing, but the reader is thrown off course by a sudden phrase of teeth-gritting awfulness. Our heroine "stunned the rites of reconciliation" which means, I suppose, that she

refused a solacing screw, a beneficent bonk, a forgiving f*** – alliteration is a terrible thing.

We are on safer ground with the unfolding of the two stories that make the body of the novel. The contemporary story is that of Elsa, who works in an independent film production company and wants to make a film about the World War One poet, Valentine Siddons. Her discovery of the mystery behind the legend leads her into a personal discovery too – of the man she is ready to love. It is a simple romance but it is told with conviction and verve.

Their story is intertwined with that of the poet himself, who marries young and foolishly, loves an older and selfish woman, and goes to his death at Passchendaele. The two stories are told alternately, and inevitably there is a drift of interest towards the story of love, frustration and death, and away from the lighter notes of the modern story. Contemporary life has less glamour than prewar Edwardian England, the issues for Valentine Siddons are graver than those of his modern-day biographers.

When the poet is sent forward to the front line, the narrative takes a darker and powerful turn. This part of the novel is excellently researched and movingly told. Thynne has the ability to paint a landscape, and explore a character, and her skills are well-deployed in the poignant descriptions of a countryside and men destroyed by war. Elsa, the modern heroine, speaks from the heart when she says that to make a romantic and rosy picture of such a past is to betray the dead who were forced to their deaths in a war that was neither rosy nor romantic. Thynne can congratulate herself on this: that she has been true to her heroine's standards. She has not written a "dreadful sepia-tinted love story", "all passion and haircuts", but a thoughtful and powerful account of a war which still casts a shadow today.



Embedded in the past: David Bowie in 'Merry Christmas, Mr Lawrence' PHOTO: KOBAL

Julie Wheelwright on the captive's life sentence

Easy Peasy by Lesley Glaister, Bloomsbury,
£15.99

Half a century after the Second World War's end, its psychological reverberations still ripple quietly through our lives. But the impact on the thirtysomething generation of their parents' war is a rich seam largely ignored until recently. Now Lesley Glaister explores the shaping of a family by a father's experiences in a Japanese prisoner of war camp. *Zelda*, a second-hand clothes dealer who lives with her female lover Foxy, learns that her father has committed suicide. She rewrites her memories, searching for a key to understanding his misery, and turns to a relatively happy period just at the edge of puberty. With consummate skill, Glaister evokes the unalloyed sweetness of a child's pleasure: a tree house complete with an ant farm, the smell of a baking Swiss roll, the peace of early mornings.

But at night Zelda lies braced for her father's screams, which regularly jar the household from its sleep. Although never spoken, his trauma is acted out through strange habits. History's significance is woven through the novel. Foxy is an oral historian, but adopted with no interest in finding her birth parents; Zelda dresses in Forties' fashions.

The tension that runs like a live wire through relationships heightens when an awkward, deaf boy named Vassily Pudinichuk moves in next door and Zelda's parents force her to befriend him. Nicknamed "dog-belly", Vassily is the fatherless new boy at school, and his Mum is on the game. With their uncanny instinct for hounding the vulnerable, the children select him for torture and Zelda's own cruel jokes escalate as her father pays him increasing attention at home. Egged on by her elder sister, the girls plot revenge. "It was as if I had a goblin's face printed on my heart, ugly, far uglier than Dog-belly's... If he had been big and strong I don't think I would have felt like that. But he was weak."

Glaister deftly controls a complicated plot and an emotionally charged subject without descending into clichés about the victims of war. Zelda's adult memories of Vassily parallel her revelations about her father's war experiences. As she begins to accept the horrors of her father's wartime legacy, she looks with a new pragmatism on her relationship with the faithless Foxy. The adult Vassily, now a successful architect, accepts Zelda's apology. Finally, Wanda, Vassily's errant mother, emerges as the unexpected link in the chain who allows for understanding and forgiveness. With understanding there is closure, and the dead can finally rest.

Tropical baroque and roll

Alberto Manguel shares his passion
for a perfect summer's read

The Agüero Sisters
by Cristina García, Picador, £15.99

John Ruskin would not have been happy in the tropics: he didn't approve of Nature having human passions. "The state of mind that attributes to it those characters of a living creature is one in which the reason is unlinged by grief. All violent feelings have the same effect." Well, maybe in England. But in Cuba (or in the New Cuba aka Miami) things are different. The weather is vengeful, the earth greedy, the fruit erotic, the birds ominous, the water full of dangerous memories. To survive, one must observe these emotions and learn from them. Ruskin wouldn't have lasted a day.

In Cristina García's second novel, two sisters, one in Miami and one in Cuba, learn through trial and error to read Nature's changing moods. Reina, the Cuban, an electrician trained by the *Revolucion*, is adept at taming electrical power, but that does not prevent her from becoming its victim. While attempting to lift electric pumps from the jungle mud, she is felled by a bolt of lightning that leaves her radiant with sensual heat and in need of skin grafts. Constanica, in her Florida exile, can command from flowers and fruits the essences needed for her celebrated beauty concoctions, but she will not heed to Goddess of Nature, Oshun (who in Christian lands is also the Virgin Mary) and must eventually make amends for her stubbornness.

Hoping that together they may begin to make sense of their disjointed lives, Reina travels to Miami to live with her sister, from whom she was separated in childhood.

To understand the will of Nature, the sisters must understand themselves. Nature's emotions (Ruskin would have had a fit) are reflected in the sisters as in two dark mirrors, and also in those who surround them: their parents, whose love ended in murder and suicide; their grandfather from

distant Spain; their inefficient husbands and lovers; their difficult daughters who must repeat their mothers' mistakes until the chain is broken.

Half adventure story and half romantic thriller, *The Agüero Sisters* is packed with clues to the sisters' identity: in the past, the father's attraction to rare, or vanished species, and the mother's uncanny ability to discover lost worlds; in the present, Reina's sexual avidity which her own daughter inherits, and Constanica's appropriation of her mother's features until she can no longer recognise herself. "Life is in the mirror," runs a line of verse her father once taught Reina, "and you are the original death." The sisters' quest, in the end, is no more than the search for their own mortality.

In 16th-century Spain, the baroque artists of the Counter-Reformation devised a clever method for making sense of the divine mystery and yet allowing it to remain secret. They surrounded a kernel of meaning with layers of volutes and flourishes, so that its existence could only be guessed at from its outer skin. Cristina García (who writes in English) has used this device to great effect in this formidable and enthralling novel. Both Cuban realities – life on the island under Castro, and exile and wishful thinking in Miami – are utterly convincing and ultimately mysterious. The sisters' rich saga takes place simultaneously in the daily Cuban world of home cooking, Castro's restrictions and Miami's politics of exile, as well as in the inhuman world of gods older than history – gods of earth and water whom most of us have chosen to forget.

From the first luscious pages describing a duck hunt in Cuba to the epilogue (which retells the hunt, this time charged with our knowledge of that "thin, permanent season", the future), *The Agüero Sisters* cannot be put down. Sexy, pungent as a mango, wildly romantic, redolent of the tropics, it is a perfect summer's read – even in the sober land of Ruskin.

Ancient and modern: India at 50

Michael Arditti takes a taboo-breaking tour of the underworld

The Invisibles by Zia Jaffrey
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £15.99

In 1984, Zia Jaffrey travelled from America to Delhi for a family wedding. She was astonished to discover the uninvited but tolerated presence of the *hijras* (eunuchs), who sang raucously, mimicked childbirth, insulted the guests and were paid handsomely for their pains. Her wish to learn more about this ancient tradition was discouraged. Instead, she was advised to "study something useful, like our urban development planning". Fortunately, stubbornness prevailed.

The result, 12 years later, was *The Invisibles*, which might have been titled *The Unknownables*. Although Jaffrey undertakes a fascinating voyage around the *hijras*, much about them – from their development to their current strength, variously estimated at between 25,000 and 1,250,000 – remains a mystery. Despite the apparent openness of a particular eunuch "family", their revelations are carefully guarded. They are happy to discuss the more socially acceptable aspects of their lives (their presence at weddings and after childbirth) while categorically denying any murkier practices: kidnap, mutilation and prostitution.

The Invisibles, appropriately for its subject, is a hybrid. The quest for the *hijras* provides Jaffrey (and the reader) with the opportunity to discover India. She describes herself as born with "that spiritual wishy-washiness" of being neither Indian nor American. The "otherness" of the *hijras* mirrors her own. Her aunt warns her that to study the eunuchs will make no man want her: the subject is so taboo in polite society that she is ushered out of a party when she broaches it. On the other hand, friends and contacts go out of their way to help her, battling with an inefficient bureaucracy.

One part of Jaffrey's scheme is to provide a historical perspective on the *hijras*. She is told that in contemporary *hijra* society "all castes are represented... Hindu and Muslims alike". Their origins are, however, more contentious. They are mentioned in the ancient Hindu epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. It is probable that the tradition, which flourished in North India, derived from Hinduism and grew in prominence under Islam.

Jaffrey quotes Western observers from Marco Polo onwards on the role of eunuchs under the feudal rulers. Some commended their loyalty, most denounced their barbarism and servility. She notes the British attempt to destroy their privileges as part of the policy of ridding India of her "debased oriental practices". In the event, all they did was to drive the *hijras* from the countryside to become part of the urban underclass, which the British largely ignored.

Her exploration of this underclass constitutes the most engrossing sections of the book. She provides a gruesome eyewitness account of a castration ceremony, where a boy is made to sit on a thickly oiled wooden phallus prior to having his testicles removed. Other sources tell of the *hijras* cutting off their own penises (which palace eunuchs had to produce, pickled in jars, as proof of their impotence). One common way for the *hijras* to extort money is by threatening to expose themselves; another is by threatening to expose the impotence of married men. They have the licensed railway of Shakespearean fools, witnessed when they sing at the birth of the first child (after 12 years) of a Hyderabad businessman and name the boy as the son of the family's cook.

In the last resort, there is a sadness about the *hijras*, exemplified for Jaffrey when she returns to India after 10 years and finds the original "family" who befriended her in ruins. Indian society is ordered around families. Excluded from ordinary families, the *hijras* create an alternative, grouped around a guru, but it is one born of desperation rather than freedom. The self-mutilation is the antithesis of any exploration of sexual ambiguity that might be welcomed in the West.

This is a lucid, sympathetic and unsensational exploration of a unique phenomenon. At the end, one of Jaffrey's correspondents writes that he hopes that "you will be fair in dealing with the subject, so that it may not hurt the feelings of any caste or creed or person". It is a hope which she has admirably fulfilled.

Saint and spinner: Denis Judd unravels the Mahatma myth

Rediscovering Gandhi by Yogesh Chadha
Century, £20

The life of Mahatma Gandhi intrigued, baffled and inspired his contemporaries. Today it is no easier to arrive at the essential truth about a man whom the great radical journalist James Cameron called "one of the truly significant figures of the 20th century" and whom Winston Churchill sneeringly dismissed as "a half-naked fakir". Was he, as a police report concluded in 1915, simply "a psychological case", or a uniquely gifted politician whose consummate skills mobilised the Indian masses and tore the heart out of the British Raj?

Next week sees the 50th anniversary of the creation of India and Pakistan. In January 1998 it will be half a century since Gandhi's assassination. Given the current torrent of commemorative books and programmes, the publishers' claim that this is "the first major biography of Gandhi for over twenty years" is a touch too ambitious. Yogesh Chadha has set out to reclaim Gandhi "as a human being out of the many myths surrounding him. He had his failings and his favourites, but to suppress these weaknesses would be to undermine his strengths".

The biography is very readable and, given the astounding complexity and range of Gandhi's activities, manageable and accessible. The quotations are

mostly well chosen, sometimes unfamiliar and rarely too long. Chadha employs a commendable variety of views and interpretations, and seems genuinely to be striving to uncover the truth. The turning-points of Gandhi's career are convincingly explained. His principles, or possibly his eccentricities, are fairly scrutinised – including his renunciation of sexual relations with his wife.

On this issue, Chadha quotes Gandhi's assertion that sexual intercourse was sinful save for procreation, and that abstinence had a higher purpose: "Without conquering lust, man cannot hope to rule over self, without rule over self there can be no *swaraj* (self-rule)". But he also reminds us of the more plausible theory that Gandhi's "attitude towards sex had emanated from the profound sense of guilt" he experienced as a result of making love with his wife rather than being with his father when he died.

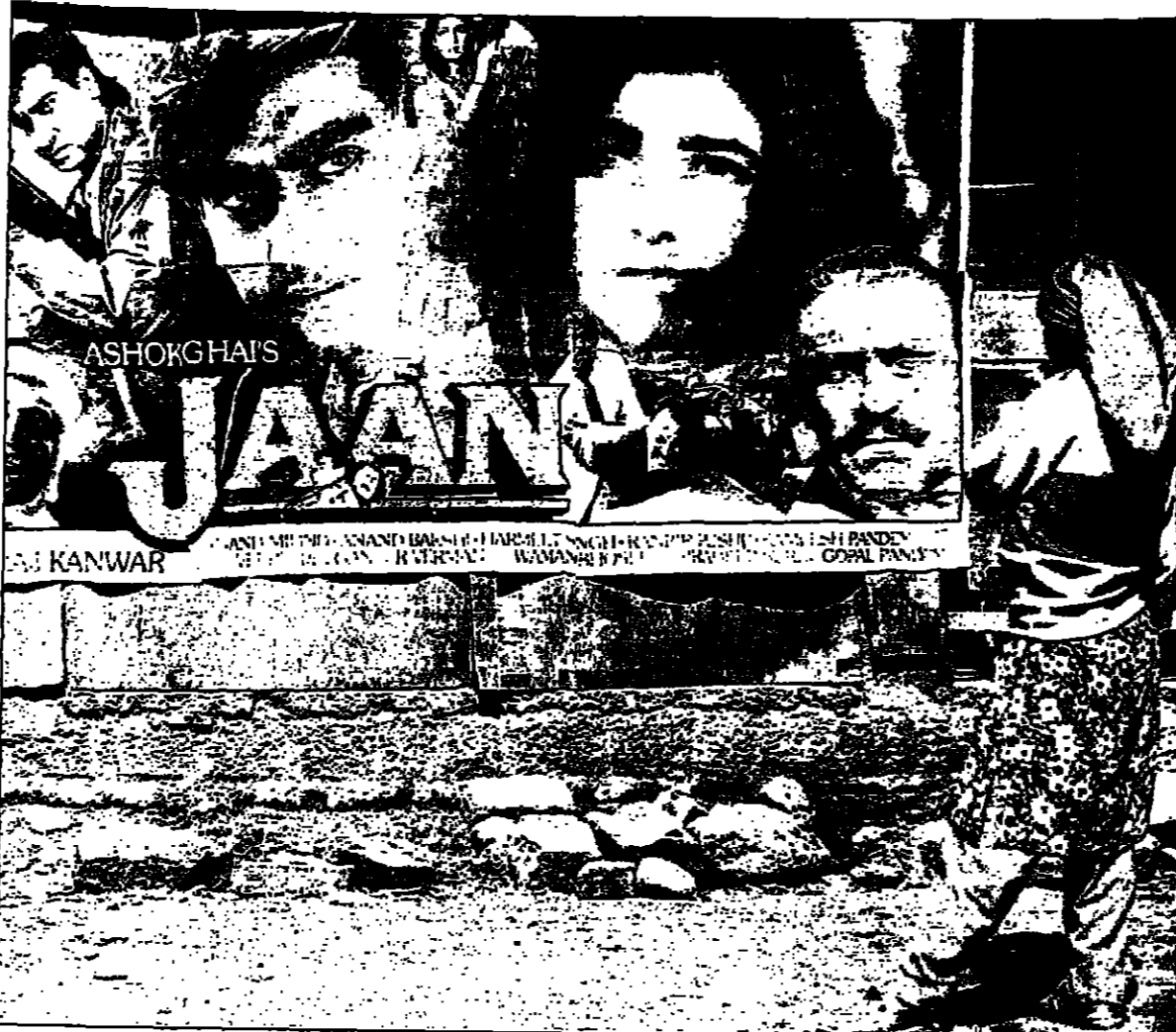
There are failings in the book. The understanding of some of the imperial and British background is incomplete. The bibliography is brief, dated and omits some crucial works. The end-notes are unconventionally presented and hard to follow. Edwin Montagu, the reforming Secretary of State for India in the early 1920s, becomes "Montague" throughout. Gandhi's role in wrecking the draft constitution painfully negotiated in 1946 after the arrival of the British Cabinet Mission is seriously underestimated. The

chapter on the plot to kill Gandhi is enticingly entitled "A Permissive Assassination" but signally fails to deliver new information.

Despite these, and other, reservations, Chadha's biography charts with some skill its subject's transformation from awkward, youthful mediocrity to political superstar. In many ways, Gandhi was good news for the Raj, despite his potential for mobilising the masses and his sheer cussedness.

Gandhi preached non-violent resistance, and not bloody revolution. He had a taste for parleying with viceroys rather than throwing bombs at them, and remained on good terms with almost all his chief British opponents – although the same could not be said about his relations with either the Muslim leader Jinnah or the pro-Japanese Subhas Bose.

Perhaps this is why his abrupt and shocking death moved so many to grief. Jan Smuts, for whom he astutely made a pair of sandals while imprisoned in South Africa for his civil rights campaign before the First World War, wrote "A prince among men has passed away". Mountbatten could be moved to tears at the recollection of his assassination, 25 years later. The veteran French socialist Leon Blum spoke for millions when he said: "I never saw Gandhi. I do not know his language. I never set foot in his country and yet I feel the same sorrow as if I have lost someone near and dear."



IMAGES OF INDIA

Search for identity: in the half-century since the sub-continent's independence, the practice of untouchability persists in subtle and crude forms, while many minorities continue to feel insecure

PHOTOGRAPHS: GUEFF PERURY

What grade does the free state deserve? A middle second class, says Bhikhu Parekh

The Idea of India by Sunil Khilnani
Hamish Hamilton, £17.99

Independent India's 50th anniversary offers a good opportunity to assess its achievements and failures. Its territorial integrity remains intact; unlike the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia it has defied all predictions about its disintegration. Democracy has struck roots: its brief suspension in the Seventies was decisively ended by a determined electorate. Liberalism, too, is deeply inscribed in India's major institutions, and the country remains firmly committed to individual rights.

It has so far elected two Muslim and one Sikh presidents, and has elected or appointed minority representatives to the most sensitive positions. After initial panic, the country has learnt to live with and even cherish its differences. Its cultural life displays remarkable vitality and its literary achievements have won international acclaim. When both the *New Yorker* and *Granta* devote special issues to English-language writing in India, Indians can rightly feel proud.

But India's failures are as depressing as its achievements are impressive. Nearly a third of its people live below the poverty line, and just over a third are illiterate. Although the hideous practice of untouchability was declared unlawful within two years of independence, it persists in subtle and crude forms. Some of India's minorities feel insecure, and fear the worst if the Hindu nationalists come to power – as seems increasingly likely.

Indian politics is heavily criminalised and thrives on corruption. The large middle class wallows in shallow consumerism and lacks a social conscience. India's higher education is in a shambles, and its creative output in philosophy and the social and natural sciences meagre. Its deeply colonised consciousness remains parasitic on the West. Overall, independent India's performance merits a middle second class.

How are India's successes and failures related, and how can they be explained? Sunil Khilnani's elegant and well-argued book addresses these and related questions. Although at places hurried and inconclusive, and somewhat over-committed to the modernist project, he tackles them with erudition and insight.

In Khilnani's view, India began well under its first prime minister. Jawaharlal Nehru was convinced that India needed a strong state both to hold the country together and to give it a coherent identity. He knew that the state had to be democratic, secular, culturally plural and committed to industrialisation. Accordingly he devoted his considerable energies to build-

ing up state institutions, consolidating the Congress Party, successfully selling his pluralist vision to the masses, and giving the new state popular legitimacy.

For Khilnani, *Indira Gandhi's* long rule represented a change for the worse, though not without redeeming features. She split Congress, politicised state institutions, undermined federalism and revived religious and caste identities. Relying on crude populist appeals, she undermined the role of mediating institutions and equated democracy with simple majority rule. Her economic strategy was incoherent, weakly implemented and heavily mortgaged to the cause of her own survival.

However, Mrs Gandhi's populism had the ironic consequence of deepening democracy. Once people were told that they were the ultimate and unmediated source of power, they used it in every way they could to pursue their goals. For Khilnani, Mrs Gandhi's successors – including her son Rajiv – lacked even such vision as she had, and were largely content to stay in power by sectional appeals and devolving power to the regions. When the Indian economy became virtually bankrupt in the early 1990s, they turned to liberalisation as a panacea without much thought as to how it affected the poor and sucked the country into the global economy.

For Khilnani, unrestrained liberalisation, the rise of Hindu nationalism, pressures for a one-dimensional national identity and the failure to appreciate the centrality of the state constitute the major dangers facing the country today. He rightly suggests that the answer lies in a pluralist vision of India committed both to respect for its deep diversity and to coherent economic development.

Much of what Khilnani says is persuasive and deserves attention. I was disappointed that Nehru was not located in the modernist tradition, which had begun to develop from the early decades of the 19th-century onwards. As a result, he appears to come from nowhere and seems more original than he really was.

Although Khilnani is right to stress the importance of the state and democracy, he uncritically accepts the Western understanding of them and misses the complex ways in which Indians have given them distinctly Indian forms. As for Hindu nationalism, its belated entry on the scene needs an historical context. For nearly 25 years, Nehru's secularism was a regnant doctrine. Neglected and despised visions of Indian identity predictably struck back at the first available opportunity, with a militancy that augurs ill for the country. If they are to be tamed, the Nehruvian vision needs to be broadened and deepened.

Cheltenham Festival of LITERATURE

In association with THE INDEPENDENT

10th - 19th October 1997

Martin Amis • Richard Briers • Sara Banerji • John Banville • Malcolm Bradbury • Melvyn Bragg • Alain de Botton • Alan Clark • Edwina Currie • Frank Delaney • Colin Dexter • Jonathan Dimbleby • Paul Durcan • Sebastian Eklöf • Felipe Fernández-Armesto • Roy Foster • Victoria Glendinning • Roy Hattersley • John Hegley • Ian Hislop • P D James • Jenny Joseph • Gerald Kaufman • Penelope Keith • Hanif Kureishi • Doris Lessing • Ian McEwan • Anthony Minghella • Adrian Mitchell • Andrew Motion • Candia McWilliam • Les Murray • Michael Palin • Piers Paul Read • Michèle Roberts • Carol Robinson • Arundhati Roy • Rick Stein • Roy Strong • Claire Tomalin • Rose Tremain • Keith Waterhouse • Auberon Waugh • Mary Wesley

These are just some of the exciting names to look forward to at this year's Festival. In a packed programme, the Festival explores Irish writing, surveys the End of Empire and, in a one-day extravaganza, celebrates the Age of Decadence. Book it, our festival for children, has exciting events for readers of all ages, with visits from Roger McGough, Paula Danziger and Shirley Hughes among many more.

New for 1997, the Festival introduces *Voices Off*, a carnival of language and laughter: bite and beat, warmth and wonder. Town centre venues will host performances by established writers, explosively good newcomers and solo musicians. With top street theatre acts, colourful bangers and impromptu performances throughout the day, Cheltenham will be celebrating literature on a grander scale than ever before.

For further details ring the 24 hour Brochure Hotline Tel: 01242 23377 or return the coupon to: Cheltenham Festival of Literature Box Office, Town Hall, Imperial Square, Cheltenham GL50 1QA. Booking your tickets please call the Box Office Tel: 01242 221099.

Please return the form below to the Cheltenham Festival of Literature Box Office, Town Hall, Imperial Square, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 1QA.

I would like to receive the 1997 Literature Festival Brochure:

BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE

Name: (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss)

Address:

Postcode:

Daytime Tel.

IND4

Paperbacks



By Christopher Hirst
& Emma Hagestadt

The Orchard on Fire by Sheila Mackay (Minerva, £5.99) Mackay evokes the smell of discarded Woodvines and old-fashioned lipstick with an elegiac sensuality usually reserved for nightingales and autumn mists. But this is no run of the mill celebration of Fifties tat. Her portrait of a Kent village, and the growing friendship of two eight-year-old girls as they discover secret orchards, *Lover's Lanes* and *dirty old men* is laced with beady humour.

Alan Bennett: in a manner of speaking by Daphne Turner (Faber, £9.99) You can see why Bennett wasn't keen on being the subject of a full-scale lit crit study. "We hear a great deal about lavatories in the plays," comments Turner, before embarking on a po-faced analysis of the comic masterpiece, *Forty Years On*. Her perceptions are keen-eyed and intelligent - "his plays are constantly interested in people who are trapped and caged" - but the ironic humour which is central to Bennett's oeuvre evaporates when placed under the critical microscope.

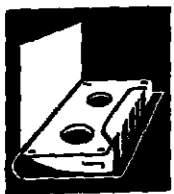
Bridget Jones's Diary by Helen Fielding (Picador, £5.99) Fans of Bridget Jones's weekly diary in *The Independent* will be glad to find that one of the happier years in her life is now heading the paperback bestseller chart in novel form. Not that Bridget's metamorphosis from Home Alone singleton into the kind of woman men like to take on weekend mini-breaks happens overnight. Before she drives into the sunset with a nerd in a diamond-patterned sweater she has to get over her crush on Daniel Cleaver, the rogue male in the publishing house where she works. And lose half a stone before Christmas. And give up smoking.

Honey From a Weed by Patience Gray (Prospect, £12.99) Part memoir, part cook-book, this quirky classic is the fruit of a 30-year stint accompanying a sculptor around Italian and Greek marble quarries. No book plumbs deeper into the Mediterranean culinary tradition. Gray is wonderfully evocative about ingredients and techniques - though it is doubtful how many readers will try *Gummariddi* (young lamb's pluck cooked on the spit). In the section on lentils, the author finds room for a disquisition on farting in English.

Jim Thompson: Omnibus 2 (Picador, £8.99) It would be hard to imagine a more pathetic bunch of low-lives than the inhabitants of Jim Thompson's Fifties paperbacks. His door-to-door salesman, hotel bell-boys and punch-drunk boxers are looking for any action they can get, but don't know what to do when the great-looking "babe" finally arrives. While the first *Omnibus* contained Thompson's best-known novels, this volume makes available five more, including *Savage Night* and *A Hell of a Woman*. Noir at its darkest... and dafest.

Graceland: going home with Elvis by Karal Ann Marling (Harvard, £9.95) In this brilliant, if highly personal, guide to both the man and his home, Marling explains how the Presley shrine differs from other places of tourist pilgrimage: "The house is full of things that we all have or used to have, or used to want, or hate." Though it is easy to scoff at Graceland's decor ("a violent Christmas-lipstick-cherry-coke-fire-engine-hellfire red") and the Polynesian-themed Jungle Den, Marling insists that Elvis was "the last great Dixie regionalist", on a par with William Faulkner.

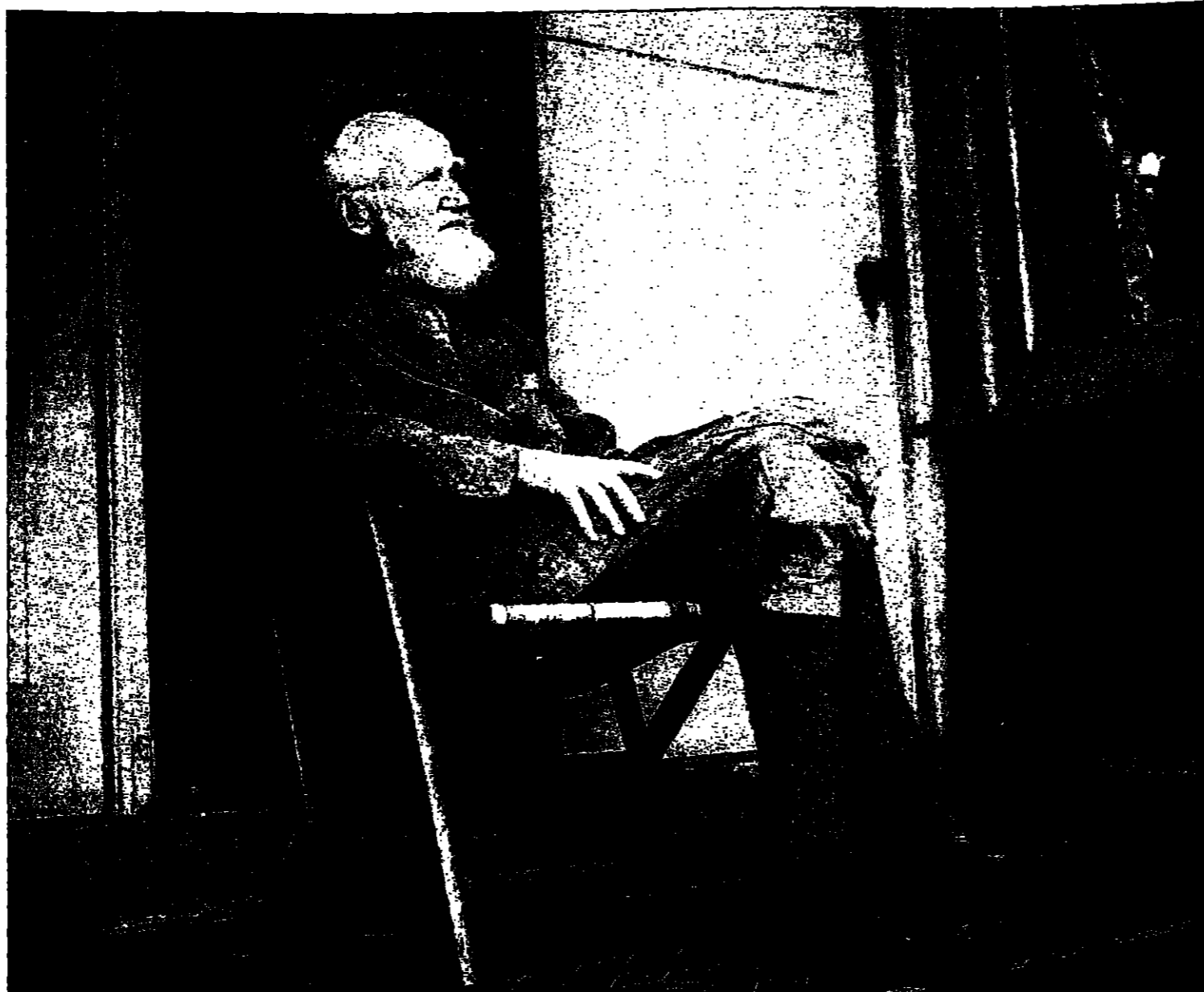
Audiobooks



Men in black are flavour of the month in spoken word releases. But you would be right in thinking that *Men in Black* (Hodder, 3hrs, £8.99), the audio novelisation of the box-office-breaking special effects movie, would be a waste of time. It is much better value, although similar in its lingering descriptions of zapping suspects to kingdom come, is *The Good Guys Wear Black* (Random House, 3hrs, £8.99). Written by Steve Collins about his experiences as a member of SO19, the Mer's Special Firearms Wing, it is read convincingly by Tim Pigott-Smith.

Christina Hardymont

NEW AUTHORS
PUBLISH YOUR WORK
ALL SUBJECTS CONSIDERED
Poetry, Non-Fiction, Biography, Memoirs
FROM CHIEF EDITOR
AUTHORS WORLDWIDE INVITED
WRITE OR SEND YOUR MANUSCRIPT TO
MINERVA PRESS
2 OLD BROMPTON RD, LONDON SW7 3SD



Knickerbocker glory: Shaw at rest and (below) at play

Man and superbore

When Bernard Shaw died in 1950, aged 94, he was the most famous writer in the world. For as long as anyone could remember he had been the same white-bearded pantaloon, part sage, part jester, pouring out a ceaseless torrent of paradoxical punditry on every subject under the sun from music and literature to politics and evolution, taking in vegetarianism, boxing, phonetics and philanthropy along the way. He was Tolstoy with jokes, a modern Dr Johnson, a universal genius who on his own modest reckoning put even Shakespeare in the shade.

When I was a boy he still cast a huge shadow. As a teenager, I bought and read all the plays that Penguin published - even the Shaw alphabet edition of *Androcles and the Lion* - and ploughed my way dutifully through the interminable prefaces. If I did not read *Everybody's Political What's What* and *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism*, I certainly felt I ought to. I grew up believing Shaw the most brilliant figure of the century. I remember thinking that Michael Holroyd had landed the greatest biographical subject of them all.

It took him - not surprisingly - nearly 20 years to produce his first volume. But in that time, Shaw's stock has gone into steep decline. It is normal for literary reputations to dip after a writer dies; then they rise again as a new generation rediscovers him. In Shaw's case, it did not happen. Holroyd's three volumes, published between 1988 and 1991, were justly hailed as a work of extraordinary condensation and powerful interpretation. The only trouble was they did not sell. The whole enterprise had come to seem overblown. I confess I was one of those who stuck at Volume One.

This single volume is therefore a welcome act of repackaging. Holroyd's name is now printed in larger type than Shaw's. Chapter headings have been added, which make it more accessible. It deserves a new audience. But to label it "definitive" is misleading. Eight hundred pages may be enough for most readers, but how can 800 be more definitive than the original 1,300?

The problem with Shaw is that he wrote too much, but no acknowledged masterpiece. Most of what he wrote was essentially journalism: even his plays are journalism by other means. Tolstoy wrote as much nonsense, but he also wrote *Anna Karenina* and *War and Peace*. George Orwell's early novels are as didactic as Shaw's worst plays. But he, too, left two masterpieces, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which is one reason we still read his journalism. (The other is the plain directness of his style, the antithesis of Shaw's exhausting bombast.)

Shaw's survival depends on a handful of his supposedly "in the Russian manner", could not be further from Chekhov's aching comedies of unspoken longing. You could not translate Shaw to modern South Africa, as Janet Suzman has just triumphantly done with *The Cherry Orchard*. Chekhov's and Ibsen's characters can be acted in a hundred different ways; Shaw's are merely puppets.

Is the 'universal genius' worth reviving? Not bloody likely, argues John Campbell

Bernard Shaw: the one-volume definitive edition by Michael Holroyd, Chatto & Windus, £25

Yet these are period pieces, museum exhibits only, as the National Theatre's recent production of *The Devil's Disciple* cruelly proved. The fact is that you cannot do anything with a Shaw play except stage it. There is nothing between the lines, as there is in Ibsen or Chekhov. *Heartbreak House*,



and mother-substitute, who seems to have spent most of her time trying to stop him working. In her sixties, she found an unlikely confidant in T E Lawrence, to whom she bared her soul. We are told, more than ever to her husband. But the daily routine of their domestic life still comes across - as GBS stage-managed it - as a Shavian farce.

The portrait only becomes human at the end, when the two old Shaws and the two old Webbs are increasingly drawn together as a quartet of dried up ancients, each longing to die before their partner. Shaw died last. On the page, as in life, death is a long time coming, and genuinely pathetic when it does. Yet Holroyd still gives GBS the last word: "Well, did I give a good performance?" He did; but it was only a performance.

writings) which seem certain to outlast anything of Shaw's. Both as a man and as a writer Oscar lives; GBS does not.

But GBS never really lived. He was a pantomime character whom Shaw fantasised over 70 years to hide... what? This is the heart of Holroyd's problem.

During his lifetime, Shaw repelled biographers by writing their books for them. He gave interviews to himself in the newspapers. He referred to himself habitually in the third person. Holroyd knows that he must penetrate this alibi.

His solution is to split Shaw into three people. "Sonny" is the insecure small boy in Dublin, uncertain of his parentage. He lacks his mother's love and grows up to seek a substitute in the world's applause and the chaste worship of a succession of strong women, mainly the actresses for whom he wrote his female roles. "Shaw" is the shadowy adult man behind the mask, and "GBS" the celebrated pantaloon.

This is clever but contrived. It leads Holroyd into complex constructions involving all three personae in a single sentence. He suggests that "the fastidious Shaw" was sometimes disgusted by "the gyrations GBS went through to gain public attention". He quotes Shaw lamenting that "people think I am always joking". But the clown's plea to be taken seriously was just part of the performance. Holroyd tracks Shaw's - or is it Sonny's? - relations with women indefatigably. But GBS conducted his affairs behind such a smokescreen of ingenious verbosity, in desperation to keep sexuality at bay, that the reader loses patience. Better the healthy fornication of H G Wells.

As for Shaw's 45-year marriage to Charlotte Payne Townsend, he can shed little light on the inwardness of the partnership. It was a *marriage blanc*, though that did not stop Charlotte being jealous of his actresses; she was his nursemaid and mother-substitute, who seems to have spent most of her time trying to stop him working. In her sixties, she found an unlikely confidant in T E Lawrence, to whom she bared her soul. We are told, more than ever to her husband. But the daily routine of their domestic life still comes across - as GBS stage-managed it - as a Shavian farce.

The portrait only becomes human at the end, when the two old Shaws and the two old Webbs are increasingly drawn together as a quartet of dried up ancients, each longing to die before their partner. Shaw died last. On the page, as in life, death is a long time coming, and genuinely pathetic when it does. Yet Holroyd still gives GBS the last word: "Well, did I give a good performance?" He did; but it was only a performance.



Boyd Tonkin

exudes "the insolent manner of one born to the top rung but three". Yes, Gore's back in town: leftier than left, but posher than posh as well. Call him a Bollinger Bolshevik, and he would probably send the insult back unless it specified a vintage.

In a summer that has stripped American letters of two great Romantic rebels - Allen Ginsberg and William S Burroughs - it's heartening to see a purely Classical troublemaker in good, if not quite top, form. (Vidal called his wonderful collected essays *United States*; so *Virgin Islands* counts as a sort of minor dependency.) In fact,

the gifted US generation that found its voice in the first postwar decade has thrived for half a century on novelty and notoriety. Among the other survivors, Norman Mailer and Saul Bellow both have new work out within the next few weeks, while the slightly younger John Updike has just invited Net-heads to collaborate on a whodunit. Always cattily conscious of his peers' merits and defects, Vidal

upends a vat of spite over Updike's sleek head halfway through this book. In a venomous attack reprinted from the *TLS*, he spits that "there is no received opinion that our good rabbit does not hold with passion".

The *causis belli* here is no mere literary rivalry, but Updike's culpable refusal to oppose the Vietnam War. "Updike is for the president, any president, right or wrong". Unpatriotic Gore, in contrast, takes his seditious side as seriously (and as playfully) as ever. It keeps his prose aloft and mind alert even when the name-dropping, back-biting Hot Gossip act begins to bore him as well as us.

One moment, he will tell us for the umpteenth time that he once ran 20,000 votes ahead of his old chum Jack Kennedy on the Democratic ticket in a Congressional election in upstate New York; the next, he employs the Freedom of Information Act to detail the exact amount spent by the US military to maintain its 31,351 personnel as a

INDEPENDENT CHOICE

AMERICAN POETRY

by Lachlan Mackinnon

About 10 years ago, a leading publisher told me that American poetry had become virtually unsaleable in this country, and that we should expect to see much less of it. It seemed to reflect a depressing intensification of our literary insularity, and one of the most encouraging features of the past three or four years has been a renewed interest in American writing. The four books reviewed here exemplify the range of what is becoming available.

Anthony Hecht is a formal, learned poet with a dark sense of humour. The first half of *Flight among the Tombs* (Oxford, £10.99) consists of 22 poems in which Death speaks as a variety of characters, among them a Mexican revolutionary and an Oxford don. As the Mexican, Death tells us that "Wines of the great chateaux/ Have been uncorked for you".

The reader is a rich gringo tourist. Death recommends "the quail/ Which you'd do well to eat/ Before your powers fail/ For I inaugurate/ A brand-new social order/ Six cold, decisive feet/ South of the border". The chill conclusion characterises most of this group, which tend to limit themselves by ending a touch too neatly.

The second section of this book, "Pravist on Skates", contains 14 poems, mostly elegiac in feeling, mostly underpowered. This is a disappointing book from a major poet, but it is redeemed by one longer poem, "Death the Whore". From its opening lines - "Some thin grey smoke twists up against a sky/ Of German silver in the sullen dusk/ From a small chimney among leafless trees" - we sense that the poet's imagination is fully engaged. This poem has the movement and the measure of some of Hecht's finest achievements, and will be read long after anything else here.

C K Williams was one of the poets whose work provoked the renewal of interest in American writing. Almost all the new poems in *The Vigil* (Bloodaxe, £7.95) are written in one form, consisting of very long, almost prosy lines which allow Williams to build detail and qualify his judgements like a novelist - almost like a slightly more rapid Henry James.

"Old Man" begins

"Special: Big Tus

says the

advertisement for a

soft-core magazine

on our

neighbourhood news-

stand, / but forget her

breasts - a lush,

fresh-lipid blonde,

skin glowing gold,

sprawls there,

resplendent/ Sixty

nearly, yet these

hardly tangible,

hardly better than

harlots can still stir

me." The poet moves

from this

commonplace

experience to

consider what his

youth did to his

erotic self, an incident in Israel,

a photograph "in a book

on pre-war Poland", death and his wife's beauty before

returning to the photograph. It sounds ragged, but a

tremendously clear logic leads to the ending:

"Vamp, siren, seductress, how much more she reveals in

her glare of ink than she knows/ how she incarnates our

desperate human need for regard, our passion to live in

beauty/ to be beauty, to be cherished, by glances if by no

more, of something like love, or love." Although there are

some duff pieces here, and although the danger of relying

on one form is that it is harder to remember individual

poems clearly, this is a rich, ambitious, rewarding book.

Carcanet is now at the forefront in publishing American

poets, and the new selections it offers of James Tate

(*Selected Poems*, £9.95), and Harvey Shapiro (*Selected*

Poems, £8.95) join a remarkable list. Both Tate and Shapiro

remember an earlier poet, Theodore Roethke (1908-63).

Tate's "Conjuring Roethke" begins "Prickle a lamb/ giggle a

yam/ beat a chrysanthemum/ out of its head/ with a red

feather." This is a rather clumsy imitation of the side of

Roethke's work which drew on nursery rhymes. Shapiro's

"1949" begins with "Memories of Ted Roethke at Yaddo",

where, "I came to wake him after my lunch/ and he would

rise, vomit/ mix a pitcher of martinis and woe/ headed for

the tennis courts." Remembering an early poem's

rejection, "Roethke's eyes filled with tears - / his poem

already anthology famous but the wound/ open still. The

Garden Master but/ tendril-tender all his short life."

Although also echoing Roethke, Shapiro does so with an

economy and accuracy which put Tate's poem to shame.

This difference is everywhere apparent. James Tate is a

much-praised, prize-winning jolly surrealist. Less deft than

John Ashbery, he writes poems whose lack of evident

content is in the end extremely tedious. This book shows us

what an institutionalised *avant-garde* can come to.

Harvey Shapiro, on the other hand, begins in a slightly too

literary way but, over the years, comes to a lucidity and

candour I found entirely gripping. A typical example is

"Questions":

The idiot sound of someone's stereo

in the apartment below. The bass thudding

like something caught in a trap.

People live in that racket the way I live

with my questions, the things I don't know.

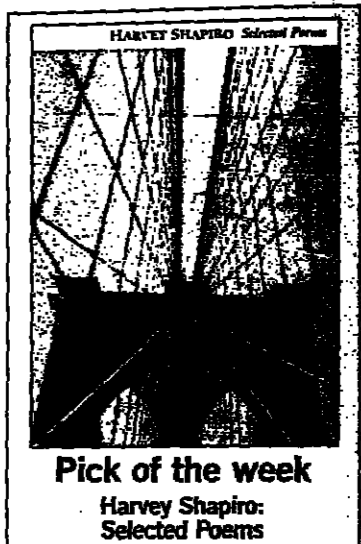
For example, an image of the successful life,

or what is the good, or how can I get

from here to where I want to be, and where is that.

It is in the hope of hearing such a voice that we read

American - or any - poetry at all.



Pick of the week
Harvey Shapiro:
Selected Poems

travel & outdoors



Point of views

As the British mainland's most westerly arm, Ardnamurchan is off the tourist map. But for those who make the journey, writes Steve Crawshaw, the peninsula's natural beauty is matched only by its tranquillity

It seemed that Scottish holidays and I were not destined to be a happy match. Six years ago, what promised to be a blissful fortnight on the island of Arran was interrupted on the second day by the radio headlines, which woke us with annoyingly dramatic news. "The Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, has been overthrown in a coup," I heard through my half-sleep. I was responsible for *The Independent's* coverage of Russia at the time. I told myself for as long as I could that it was probably just a dream. Eventually, however, I was forced to confront reality. By the time I stumbled downstairs, a message was lying on the kitchen table. "Please phone office urgently," Arran, it was nice to know you.

This time, the planned Scottish holiday began with almost equally daunting omens. I fractured my skull just 10 days before the holiday began. When we embarked on the journey, I was still suffering from a constant headache like a bad hangover. I did not, to be blunt, expect it to be much of a holiday. But then, I had reckoned without Ardnamurchan.

If you have not heard of Ardnamurchan, join the large club. The peninsula does not enjoy (or suffer from) the high profile of many of the Scottish islands and large chunks of the Scottish mainland. Some of its distinguishing points are mere curiosities. It is the westernmost point of the British mainland - 20 miles further west than Land's End. It is geologically renowned: one village is sited on a solidified mass of liquid lava, inside the giant "ring-dyke" amphitheatre of an extinct volcano. There is an abundance of pre-historic standing stones and the like.

Above all, though, it is the spirit of Ardnamurchan that keeps the devotees enthusiastic. The poet Alasdair Maclean (no relation to Mr *Guns of Navarone*) brought a small dose of not-quite-fame with his *Night Falls On Ardnamurchan*. "I have always looked on the ferry that crosses the Narrows of the Linne Loch at Corran [from the mainland to the Ardnamurchan peninsula] as a kind of mobile decompression chamber," he wrote, "where various kinds of pollution were drained from the blood and I was fitted to breathe pure air again."

Even the first-time visitor is touched by something of this. After crossing from the mainland, south of Fort William, the single-track road winds its way through the woods that line the shore of Loch Sunart, with views alternately cosy and grand. Moorland and woodland, mountain

PENINSULA PATHS

Getting there
From most parts of Britain, the easiest place to start is Glasgow (accessible from London on a £25 special by Virgin Trains, 0345 991995). From Glasgow Queen Street, ScotRail runs four trains a day on the West Highland Line via Fort William to Lochailort, the closest station to Ardnamurchan Point, for £34.90 return. Call 0345 484950 for times. The closest place to rent a car is Fort William, where Budget (01397 702500) has an office.

Where to stay
Feorag House in Glenborrowdale (01972 500249) is a small hotel with its own little seal-inhabited bay. Dinner, bed and breakfast costs £59 in the high season or £49 in the low season. For bed and breakfast only the price is £39 per night in the high season and £29 in the low. Kilkcamb Lodge Hotel (01967 402257) in

Strontian, just before you reach the Ardnamurchan, costs between £69.50 and £85 per person per night, including a four-course evening meal. For self-catering accommodation, Steading Holidays (01972 510262) has properties throughout the peninsula and Ardnamurchan Estate (01972 510208) has a number of properties for rent. A full list of accommodation and an information leaflet is available from the Kilkcamb Tourist Information Centre (open Easter to October, 01972 510222) or the information centre in Fort William (open all year, 01397 703761).

Reading
Exploring Sunart, Ardnamurchan, Moidart and Morar (Harlequin Press); *Alasdair Maclean, Night Falls on Ardnamurchan* (Penguin); John Prebble, *The Highland Clearances* (Penguin).

Despite Ardnamurchan's bitter history, today the peninsula is a tranquil haven for the few people who visit
PHOTOGRAPH: ANGUS JOHNSON
STILL MOVING PICTURES

watched seals play and tease each other splashing on and off rocks a few feet from the boat. The walks here are no less dramatic for being undemanding. You can stroll along the old crofters' path from Ockle or Kentra Bay to the "singing sands" - squeaky underfoot, hence the name - of Gortenfearn. On the way, we stopped for picnics beside mountain streams, hidden in the bracken and heather, with spectacular views across to Skye.

Obtaining reliable information for local walks can be difficult. A brochure (*Exploring Ardnamurchan*) claims to give all necessary information. In reality, you will have to hope for extra guidance from locals or from the Ordnance Survey. Sometimes the maps help; sometimes they don't. Thus, there is a more or less easy path up Ben Hiant, the Holy Mountain. The path, beginning on the mountain's eastern side, is well known - but not marked on the maps. From the summit, there are commanding views east along Loch Sunart, south down the Sound of Mull, and north and west past the Egyptian-style lighthouse at Ardnamurchan Point to the distant outline of the Cuillins on Skye. The red deer all around are disturbed by nothing and nobody except that familiar feature of all Britain's wildest places - the occasional, deafening roar of a low-flying RAF plane.

Ardnamurchan isn't the place for those who want to conquer impressive-sounding peaks. It has not a single Munro - nor, by the same token, any crowds of Munro-baggers. Its only selling point is its sheer natural beauty. If you go there with skull intact, it might even be better than it seemed to the visitor with a cracked head.



"Welcome to Britain. Now sod off." If, by some chance, you recognise that phrase, it is not because the British Tourist Authority has come up with a catchy new Liam Gallagher-style slogan to promote the UK. It is because I wrote it three years ago, when testing the welcome we offer to visitors. The location I chose was Gatwick airport, and the perception of most new arrivals endeavouring to travel to central London was summed up by a couple of Americans who said "We're used to this crap - we're from New York."

Britain's hole in its tourism account deepened this week, with the latest figures revealing a four per cent drop in both the number of visitors and the amount they spend. We spend far more on holidays abroad than we receive from overseas visitors to the UK - a deficit of about £10m a day. The last government chose an unusual way to try to promote tourism

in Britain: cutting funding for the BTA, which seeks to entice visitors to the UK. Under the new government, an equally perverse course has been chosen: closing down the tourist information centre at Gatwick airport. From the end of September, Britain's second busiest gateway will become even less welcoming to overseas visitors.

The closure of the bureau speaks volumes about the muddle surrounding tourism promotion in Britain. Tom Clarke, the minister responsible for tourism, did not take the decision to shut the office himself. Neither did the BTA. "It wasn't our decision," says the English Tourist Board. Gatwick airport itself was not responsible; indeed, the airport provides the site free. Finally, I tracked down the man who pulled the plug: Fred Cabbage, leader of a shadowy group in Tunbridge Wells called the South East England Tourism Board.



Simon Calder

Finding the number of the Dept of Culture, Media and Sport included the comment: 'Oh, culture. I thought you said torture'

Mr Cabbage turns out to be a reasonable man. He says his decision was taken "with the utmost regret", but says his organisation could not afford to meet the £1,000-a-week cost of the service. And, with fewer than one in 10 inquiries at Gatwick about the patch he covers, why should he blow his budget on the bureau?

The job of the SEETB - slogan, "England's warmest welcome" - is to promote Kent, Surrey and Sussex; to extol the virtues of East Grinstead and West Hoathly rather than to help people who want to find a train to Torquay or a B&B in Bridlington.

Now the four staff at the airport are to lose their jobs, and new arrivals are to lose the chance of help and guidance. The task of running it, says Mr Cabbage, became "more onerous because of the reduction of central funding". So having followed the trail all the way down to a side street in Tunbridge Wells, it now seems to be leading back to Whitehall and the desk of Mr

Clarke, the tourism minister. A spokeswoman for his office says: "Choices have to be made about the allocation of resources, and this bureau does not represent an efficient use of resources, so unfortunately it has to close."

Countries such as France, Holland and Spain, which offer excellent tourist information bureaux for arriving passengers, must be delighted.

Should you feel strongly enough to complain to the minister about the closure, don't call directory inquiries. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport, which covers tourism, is unknown to British Telecom. My quest to find the number included the priceless comment: "Oh, culture. I thought you said torture."

After supervisors and managers joined the operator in trying vainly to find the number of the government ministry, BT gave up. By other, more devious means, I discovered the ex-directory number to dial: 0171-211 6000.

Escape for a late Holiday

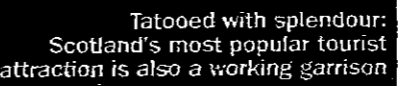
Fly off on a late summer holiday from only £381. Our all-inclusive price covers flights, meals, sports and entertainment at selected Club Med resorts in Corfu, Portugal, Sicily, Sardinia, Ibiza, Turkey, mainland Italy and Spain.

Club Med ☺ Start Living.

RESERVATIONS: 0171-581 1161 BROCHURE REQUEST: 01455 852 202
OR CONTACT YOUR LOCAL TRAVEL AGENT. ADULT WEEKLY PRICE QUOTED FOR CORFU 1990S. CORFU DEPARTURE IS 15 SEPT 97. HOLIDAYS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY

Are we nearly there

Powis Castle (01938 554338) near Welshpool, is a rosy-coloured medieval castle originally built by Welsh princes in around 1200. The castle houses one of the finest collections of paintings and furniture in Wales and a collection of Indian artwork displayed in the Clive Museum. However, the real attraction is the gardens which drip down over terraces past an orangery and an aviary to a woodland wilderness. Childrens' garden and castle quiz sheets are available for 25p and entrance costs are £6 for adults, £3 for children or £15 for a family. The castle is open daily except Mondays (although it is open on Bank Holiday Monday) between noon and 4pm and the gardens are open on the same days between 11am and 5.30pm.



FAX: 0171 293 2505

Scotland

**SELF CATERING
SCOTLAND**
"CONSULT THE EXPERTS"
Over 3,000 self-catering
properties in all areas
from luxury houses to
craik cottages.
Write or phone for
brochure:
01234 881397
**MacKay's
Self-Catering
Centres**
30 Frederick St.
Edinburgh EH2 3JR

Crofts & Castles
Thoroughbred
Stables or Splendid
Homes
HOLIDAY PROPERTIES
Type to Thousands
from £12.2 a day incl
Golf, Fishing & Swimming
Special packages with Paper
Planes
Fax: 01471 822111
01471 822112
01471 822113
01471 822114

ORINEY Comfortable,
well equipped court in quiet location by
sea. Sips & Phone/lets (01857)
800404

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL FLAT Near
centre, very comfortable, well
equipped. Ideal for £14, £200-350 per
week inc. 0131 555 1506.

**ARDNAMURCH, Puncutol &
quail, no bottle jump Country
house. Stables, Pool, Ponds from
£175. Dinner by Candlelight with
home made breads, local fish &
game. Tel: 01892 519028**

Sussex

SEDS/COSMOS Brickwork Hall,
Battled, Tudor Manor, Summer
bake. Hired pool 2 nights £102 pp
06883. Rent 2 accommodation, pay £20
00 to £200. 4 bedrooms, 1940
renovated award 91-96. 01424
470233

BRIGHTON MARINA Village.
New 2 bedroom superbly fur-
nished luxury apartment, under-
ground parking, 24hr security. Tel:
01273 945849/84. 045842

SUPERB EAST HSE. Set in south
with wonderful views from High
Weald, 5/6s. A well holiday home.
Tel 01285 800552.

Yorkshire & The Dales

YORKSHIRE, Dales, Moors,
Coast, Peak & Lake District. Over
300 self catering properties. Brochure
Holidays Cottages Bridesmaids,
Water Ski, Skipton. 03233 1195.
01750 10572

YORK OVER 25% OFF. Heworth
Court Hotel. Brochure 01904
425158

DALES BEAUTIFUL RENOVATED
cottage, 177 years old, 17, quiet
welcome, brochure 0800 563636
27-27

COTTAGES YORKSHIRE Hld. York.
Colour brochure 01485 597890.

SUPERB cottages, Yorks Dales,
Northampton, 177 years old, 17,
Sylvia Cottages 01244 345700.

Wales

PEMBROKESHIRE

A superb selection of quality
character cottages in the
Pembrokeshire & West Natio-
Park. All properties furnished to
the highest standards.
Phone now for free colour brochure
01239-881397

SNOWDONIA COASTLINE. Llynny
penninsula, Coastal and country
cottages and farmhouses. Nefyn
01758 723677

656 COTTAGE/FARMHOUSES
throughout Wales; all Tourist
Board Graded, Wales Holidays
01292 52222

GOWER CASTLE - 100's of cot-
tages, B&B's, Hotels. Broc 0600
01871

BRECON BARRAGE. Over 100 self
catering homes sleep up to 12
people. Tel 01592 per week
high season. Tel 01794 459446

BRIGHTON BREAKS - 100's of hols.
M&B, Cottages, Farmhouses,
Caravans, B&B's, Hotels, 01293
Wales, Pembrokeshire 0600

GOWRIE HOTEL 172 farmhouses in
200 acres, spectacular views,
tennis, B&B/OL C&B/S, 01 bar,
A/R/B/C. Tel 01292 51000

**If you
are
looking for
Travel Information**

INDEPENDENT

ON SUNDAY

stage, villa or apartment vacancies

endent on Sunday
olidays: 276,000 of
ented villa, flat or
year! (TOL 1996)

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO...
Either call The Travel Team on 0171 298-2222
Monday to Friday between 10.00am - 5.00pm.
or
e-mail us at travelteam@independent.co.uk
or

Fill in and return the coupon below stating the
wording you require and your payment method.
Payment can be made by cheque or by
Access/Visa/American Express/Diners Card.
PRIVATE ADVERTISERS ONLY TWO PROPERTIES OR LESS

Fill in and send to: The Travel Team, Classified Advertising, The Independent, One Canada
square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, or e-mail at travelteam@independent.co.uk

on, please call The Travel Team on 0171 298-2222

هكذا من الامم

First class: Painswick Post Office, right, will become the most ticked building in Britain when the stamp, below, is issued this week
PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER JONES



Not just a pretty face, Painswick Post Office earns its stamp of approval, writes Simon Calder



Philately gets you everywhere

Among main roads, the A46 is a heavyweight; it begins in the city of Bath and bisects Britain on a long, winding course to Grimsby. But its finest moment occurs in a corner of the Cotswolds, when it assumes the identity of New Street, Painswick.

If you are not familiar with the crumbly old village of 3,000 souls, assess this stamp of approval for Painswick: "One of the pleasantest places in the world". That wasn't the lady who runs the tourist desk in the village library - it was George III, who was especially fond of the Cotswold stone quarried hereabouts.

In the 200 years since he said that, the raw, rough rock that is Painswick's motif has mellowed to the texture of icing on a sponge, spooned on and baked to the shade of honey. Posing cutely on a curving hillside, Painswick meets all the criteria for an archetypal Cotswold village. Yet it possesses qualities well beyond the merely picturesque.

That odd-house-out on New Street, for a start.

By the year 1478, the local squire Pain Fitzjohn had already donated his name to the village, before falling

in battle against the Welsh. Columbus had yet to venture to the Americas, and the postcode "GL6 6XH" was still 500 years away from being coined. But in that year the hold, half-timbers of Westhaven House took shape. The first-class residence is now better known as Painswick Post Office, and is celebrated on a stamp issued this week. The honour was bestowed because it is England's first post office, in the sense that it occupies an older building than any other.

Like the postcode, the new stamp (above, left) barely does the place justice. The real thing (above, right) is much less orderly than its depiction, with overflowing window boxes spilling scarlet, white and purple blooms from beneath prim white frames. Above the porch, blackened beams writhe beneath the weight of the roof and the years. Sharp angles with a hint of wiggam about them hoist the eye upwards, to the Norwich Union firemark on the broadest cross-beam. In the days before Postman Pat and Fireman Sam were public concerns, these devices indicated which buildings were worth saving.

Inside, the shop is a pleasing

muddle of stonework, stationery and sweets. A giant version of the new stamp takes pride of place, with a note that the Royal Mail will be visiting next Tuesday in order to process first-day covers. This week is one for the album in Painswick: the village festival takes place today and tomorrow.

The next attraction to get sorted in Painswick is the fairest churchyard in the Cotswolds. The sheep which speckled the hillsides of Gloucestershire produced the finest English wool, which for a few centuries made Painswick's wool merchants among the wealthiest people in Britain. They ensured their interment was of the highest calibre by commissioning increasingly elaborate (and competitive) memorials in the grassy acre surrounding St Mary's Church.

A befitting cottage totters above the lych gate into the churchyard. Bowing to pass beneath it, you emerge amid a rural jostle. One component is a forest of masonry, resembling a haul of treasure chests spiked with a few stray pyramids. The other competitor is a consortium of yew trees, precisely 99 of them, standing in neat ranks but

occasionally melting into each other to form voluminous barricades of the deepest green, separating the tombs of local grandees such as William Hogg, a Gravitous Preacher who died in 1800: "It is incredible the sums of money he expended in charity", asserts his headstone.

Despite the decline in wool, money has not forsaken Painswick altogether. Any cyclist feels intimidated by kerb-to-kerb Rovers, of the Land and Range varieties. The price tags at the Fieri Beacon art gallery address themselves to the sorts of well-heeled folk who dine at the Country Elephant, next to the post office. But the latest addition to the catering repertoire, Bertram's ("a café with rooms" across from the church) charged me only a fiver for a chicken baguette that seemed to contain an entire bird, accompanied by a wheelbarrow's worth of chips and a gallon of tea.

Even allowing for refined good looks befitting an English rose, the village sustains an improbable range of restaurants and tea rooms. The reason Painswick appears on so many mental maps lies hidden a little to the north, around Buenos Ayres.

This, as you may gauge from the spelling, is not the Argentinian capital. It is the name chosen for what is now Painswick House by its creator, Charles Hyett, who moved here for the "good airs". What could be just another pretentious pile belonging to the minor aristocracy is transformed by the grounds around it. During the brief English flowering of Rococo in the 1740s, Mr Hyett imported the asymmetric aspirations of the European movement and planted them in his garden. The curves of paths and pools are assigned into a swooping gully, with the only flat patch devoted to a bowling green. Odd little outbuildings pop up, mimicking the Orient: they serve as eccentricities around which the visitor swirls. After a couple of hours in this most verdant of follies, you need another cup of tea.

Across from the churchyard, the village cascades towards the Painswick Valley, which proceeds to lit in an entrancingly pretty fashion towards Stroud. You topple down Stepping Stone Lane and clamber up the other side to the Painswick Old Road, clinging like a contour high above the valley. This used to

be a Via Regia, a royal way. Last Wednesday, as bees idly batted from one flower to the next, and the heavy summer air whispered through overgrown grass, you could find yourself in complete agreement with George III. Yet Prince Charles, a resident of nearby Highgrove, could be drawn into a battle to preserve his ancestor's vision. The local council wants to sprinkle more than a thousand new homes along the valley. As Duff Hart-Davis has reported in these pages, plans for the development are alarmingly advanced.

In Stroud, you re-join the A46 and re-enter the real world: one in which the town's stout redbrick Post Office has been closed down. Plainly, it wasn't pretty enough.

Painswick Post Office is open 9am-1pm and 2-5.30pm, but closed on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons and all day on Sunday. Painswick Rococo Garden (01452 813204) opens 11am-5pm - daily in August, then Wednesday to Sundays until the end of November.

The Painswick Local History Society publishes 'Painswick: Time Chart of a Cotswold Village' by Carl Moreland, FRGS, available locally for £5.95.

Men of letters

By Jennifer Rodger

A postman's job offers a nice little side-line in gratuitous spying on others. A novelist, of course, recreates such life on paper. So it is no surprise that for a number of writers, being a postman was their bread and butter in more ways than one.

Anthony Trollope was Clerk to the Surveyor of the South Western District of the Post Office in the 1850s. It was Trollope who initiated the design of the first Royal mail box and bullied customers into cutting holes into their doors so that the postman didn't have to ring twice.

American author, William Faulkner was a post master in the town of Oxford, Mississippi. Indeed this was the fictional setting for much of his work. Hinting at the slow and introspective life of a postman (and writer), he described Oxford as where "the past is not dead, it isn't even past".

After his days in Burma and his stint down and out, George Orwell tried his hand at running a grocers shop and sub post office in Hertfordshire during the mid Thirties. The enterprise was not a success, however, the former shop is now a bijou residence that was recently sold for more than £250,000.

Rising novelist Stephen Blanchard (author of *Gargam and I*, and *Wilson's Island*) works in a Clapham sorting office in South East London. "It provides me with a routine, purpose and gives me time to write. I'm quite good at it, too," he says.

Frank McCourt won this year's Pulitzer prize for his childhood memoirs *Angela's Ashes*. Towards the end of the book he records his experiences as a Limerick telegram boy in the Forties - a job that ultimately enabled him to escape an existence of relentless poverty in Ireland and start a new life in the States.

Post yourself around the world

Simon Calder reveals one way of pushing the envelope of your global horizons

Every traveller begins to explore the world with a trip to the post office, and these hubs of communication keep cropping up along the way. You collect the form for your first passport from your local one, and thereafter post offices remain hugely important.

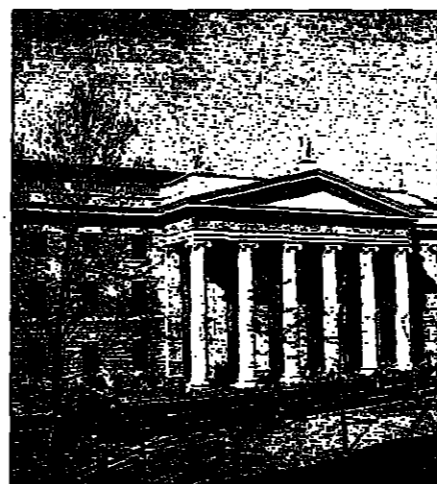
Like railway stations and frontier posts,

post offices comprise a necessary part of any journey. And whether you pop in to buy a postage stamp, or stand in line for hours while you wait for your chance to find that no one has bothered to send you a poste restante missive, some are attractions in their own right.

Dublin

That jaunty little figure, frozen in the act of wheeling from Earl Street North into O'Connell Street, is James Joyce. The author's statue stands just across the road from the symbolic heart of Irish nationalism: the General Post Office. Around 1816, when the stout Doric columns were hoisted from the drudge of what was then Sackville Street, Dublin was just another British provincial city. A century later, in the Easter Rising of 1916, the proclamation of the Republic of Ireland was read from the steps of the well-proportioned neo-classical facade.

The interior was wrecked in the subsequent siege. Today, it comfortably combines the status of nationalist icon and purveyor of postal products. The nation's largest tricolour flutters above it, splashing green, orange and white into the sky above the street which has since taken the name of the liberation hero Daniel O'Connell.



Dublin Post Office PHOTOGRAPH: MAXWELLS

Americans did not need to send letters in style. After many years of abandonment, it has now re-opened as the latest addition to the Smithsonian repertoire of museums.

The National Postal Museum traces, with a degree of levity, the tale of the US Mail from Pony Express to automated sorting. But as the hands-on computer prints out your pre-addressed postcards, you can't help thinking that while the 20th century was the preserve of the post, electronic communications in the 21st century will consign mail to the museum permanently.

Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon)

Until 1975, the staff at the US Embassy in Saigon had it easy. They could just nip two blocks south to South Vietnam's finest post office, which stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the city's cathedral. Unlike the Embassy (a concrete jumble of defences, abandoned on the last day of April 1975) and South Vietnam (ditto), the Post Office is thriving. The French took control of Saigon in 1861 and the post office shows the regime at its prime, a Poste that would not look out of place in Lyon. Inside, a map of "Indochine" shows how the old colonial order held sway over the entire region. Dominating every transaction these days, however, is a huge, beaming portrait of Ho Chi Minh.

Washington DC

The American capital is home to two fine ex-post offices, each of them a fully fledged tourist attraction - and, like most things in Washington, offering free admission.

The Old Post Office presides over Pennsylvania Avenue, a 399ft granite fortress whose innards have been scooped out and replaced with a vast, airy atrium and a dozen places to eat, including Chinese, Indian and Japanese. The building is in the care of the

Visit Buckingham Palace and treat yourself to a Royal London Break

Two nights in a 4-Star hotel* for just £149* per person

Now, you can combine the splendours of a visit to Buckingham Palace with a luxury, two night stay in an elegant London hotel.

If you visit in August, you'll stay in the sumptuous Royal Westminster, and if you visit in September or October you'll stay in the recently refurbished Grosvenor. Both hotels are just moments away from the Palace and represent the best in quality and comfort.

The Buckingham Palace Tour & Guided Royal Walk

- Welcome evening reception and introductory talk by your guide
- Dinner on night of arrival in the hotel restaurant
- Full English Breakfast
- Depart 0915 for short stroll with your guide to Buckingham Palace
- 0930 Entry to Buckingham Palace for tour lasting approx 2 hours which is first tour of the day before the crowds arrive
- 1130 (approx) Guided walk of Royal Westminster lasting about 30 minutes
- Remainder of the day and evening free to enjoy London
- Full English Breakfast

Arrivals are on each Monday, Wednesday or Friday between 11th August and 3rd October 1997

Availability strictly limited - Ask your Travel Agent to book now through Highlife on Freefone

0800 700 400

quoting reference IN908

Rail and air inclusive prices are available on request.

* Prices per person. Dinner at a hotel included. Single supplements apply. Excludes airport transfers, gratuities, and other local charges.

THE INDEPENDENT

Flight Bag

Adapts from compact case to suitcase on wheels for only £24.95 (inc p&p)

Originally designed with airline pilots and flight crew in mind, the Flight Bag easily converts from a case to a suitcase on wheels.

The cleverly designed retractable long handle and wheels are discreetly secured to the frame of the case. Simply pull the handle and lock into position and the case becomes an easy to use travel trolley, with a special strap allowing you to carry additional luggage in front. Whenever you want to use it as a normal case just push in the handle and carry it horizontally with the side handle.

There is a large zipped front pocket along with a smaller zipped compartment and ample room inside with 2 elasticated securing straps, plus a zipped compartment situated behind the handle.

The steel framed case covered in robust blue nylon fabric, with ten leather effect trim measures 22" x 13" x 8", will fit easily into an overhead locker as hand luggage and is available for only £24.95 including delivery and VAT.

HOW TO ORDER
Fill in the coupon in BLOCK CAPITALS and send together with cheque or postal order.
NO CASH PLEASE to:
THE INDEPENDENT FLIGHT BAG OFFER,
27 OSTERLEY VIEWS, WEST PARK ROAD,
SOUTHALL, MIDDLESEX UB8 4UN.
For credit card orders please phone 0181 571 0900

Delivery to UK addresses only. *Phone 0181 571 0900 for all enquiries. Please allow up to 21 days for delivery. If you are not completely satisfied please return within 7 days of receipt for a full refund.

Buy in England please? Newspaper Publishing plc, Reg Office: 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 4AF

Please send me ☐ FLIGHT BAG(S) @ £24.95 each

I enclose a crossed cheque for £ (address on back) made payable to: NEWSPAPER PUBLISHING INDUSTRY

or debit my Access/VISA account by this request. My card number is:

Expiry Date: / / Signature:

NAME: Mr/Ms/Ms/Ms

ADDRESS:

Post Code:

Send to: THE INDEPENDENT FLIGHT BAG OFFER,
27 Osterley Views, West Park Road, Southall, Middlesex UB8 4UN

Tick this box if you do not wish to receive future offers from Newspaper Publishing plc or companies associated by Newspaper Publishing plc ☐ DON'T

Customs and exercise

That summer: in 1951 Elizabeth Candlish cycled across the borders of post-war paranoia in Europe

Spending the night in the customs post between Holland and Germany wasn't part of the plan. We meant to cross the border, and perhaps find the youth hostel in Aachen. But it turned out the hostel was being rebuilt. Besides, we were two very wet and bedraggled British teenagers, and the customs men were perhaps just a little bored that day in the summer of 1951...

My friend Margaret had a German penpal in Heidelberg, so to Heidelberg we would go, cycling. We took a tent (neither of us had camped before) and home-made sleeping bags. From our homes in St Andrews, Fife, we caught a train to London, and from there took a coach to Dover where we retrieved the bikes that we'd sent on ahead of us. As we pedalled our way off the boat at Ostend it was a daunting thought that we'd never cycled further than 20 miles at a stretch.

By the time we reached that frontier post we'd been six days on the road, often in rain. Campsites as we know them now had not yet been invented, and we'd camped on small Belgian farms, twice sleeping snugly in a barn. We'd been invited into spotless farm kitchens and had met whole families, usually three generations, speaking a dialect that our school-girl French and German could not decipher, but somehow we communicated.

The French told us about the war and about the liberation, and they wanted to ask about Britain - why were we still rationed? Why had the British voted Churchill out of office - he won the war, didn't he? Everywhere our wet things were taken off to be dried and cans of hot water produced: payment was firmly refused. In the mornings we'd be waved off, with pressing invitations to come again on our return journey.

Our route took us briefly into the Netherlands, to visit friends in Maas-tricht, then we headed for the German border. Back home, some people had warned us against going into Germany. After all, the war was not so far in the past. Margaret's uncle was a detective at Scotland Yard: if in trouble, he said, we were to go to the military police - and of course he himself could be contacted at Whitehall one-two-one-two.

We reached Vaals, at the Dutch-German frontier, before 4pm, once again wet and rather miserable. As usual, there were two barriers, and two sets of offices to go through, and our passports were stamped in both. We were leaving Holland, so we were not of much interest to the Dutch. But we were entering Germany, and the inspector of immigrants wanted to know our plans. Camping? In this weather? Better to make for the youth hostel in Aachen - he would telephone to book us a place. And that was how we heard that it was being rebuilt - the war, you know...

The inspector made up his mind to befriend us. There was a hostel in Vaals,

a Dutch hostel; we could go there. And he had another suggestion: we should send our bicycles ahead by rail to Cologne, and next day he would arrange a lift for us. It was no problem to find lifts at the frontier. Why, only that day three Australian girls got one for a hundred miles.

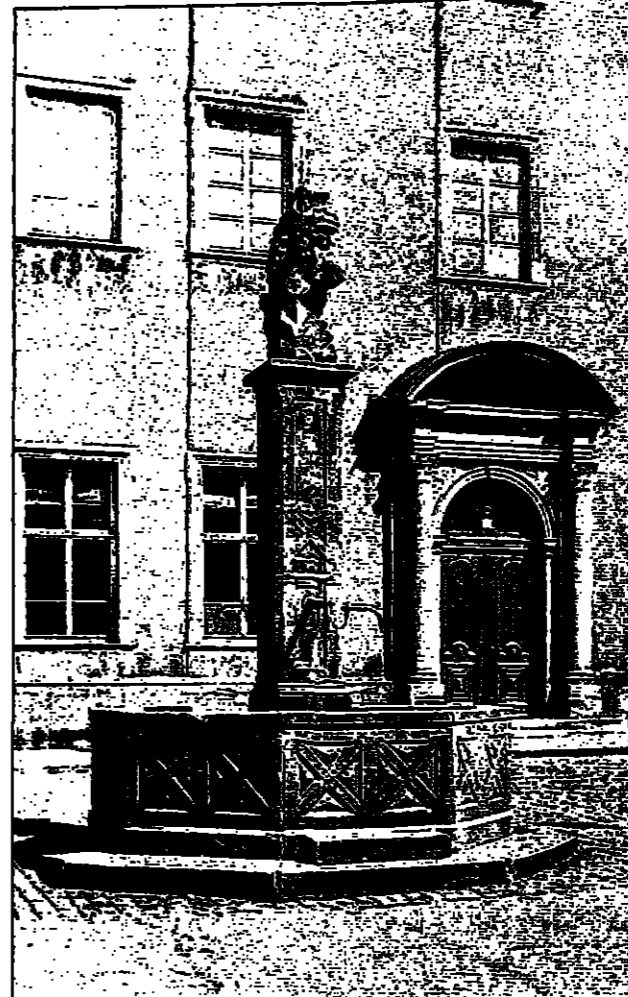
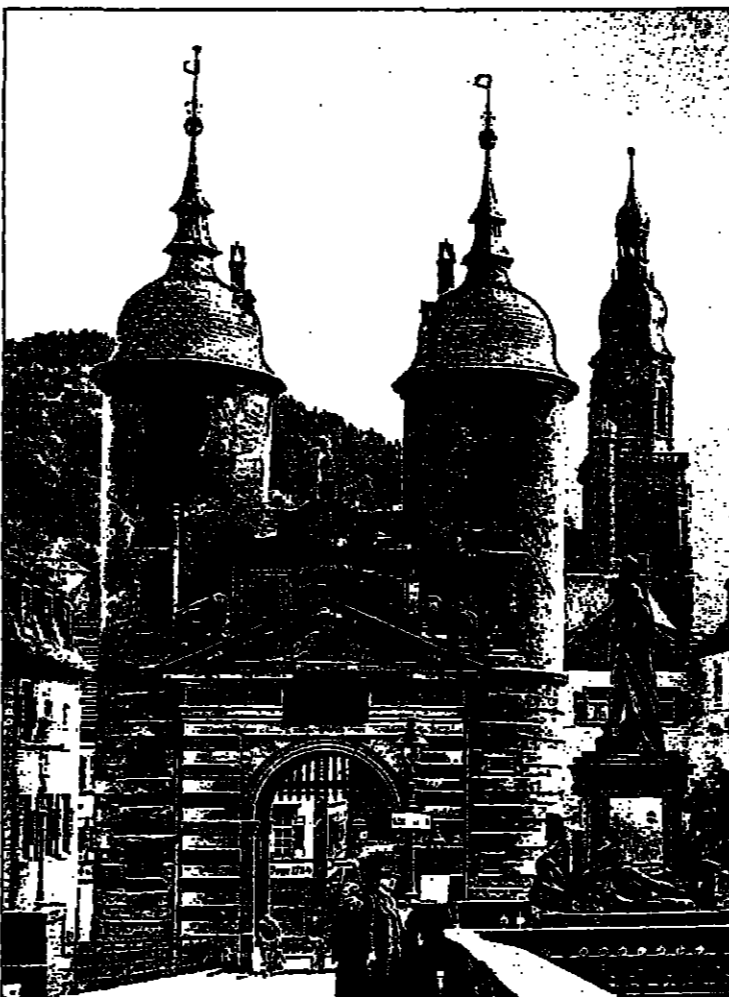
My letter home takes up the story: "Well, it was an awful day, and this seemed ideal. We cycled into Aachen, found the station, and sent off the bikes. Our friend the inspector turned up and helped us fill in the forms, which were a bit complicated. We sent our saddlebags too, taking out only a few belongings, and tying these in a bundle. We must have looked like displaced persons. Then the inspector took us back to the frontier by tram, and we put on dry socks and shoes in his office, and he took us for coffee, and got the waiter to add something to it: it tasted awful, but it certainly warmed us up. Then we found out that we were too late to get into the youth hostel so the Inspector said that he would find us somewhere to sleep at the frontier station, and meanwhile he would take us out to supper."

"He took us to a restaurant in Vaals, and we each got a huge plate of two fried eggs, bacon, bread, tomatoes, gherkin and goodness knows what else besides. It was marvellous. Later he and another customs officer took us for coffee, and told us their war stories and adventures... Then we went back to the customs post. There was a little room there where night-duty men sometimes slept - only one camp bed, but they spread heavy packages of forms on the floor, and left us their coats. We tossed for the bed, and I lost! I can't say we got much sleep - there was traffic all through the night, and voices and footsteps."

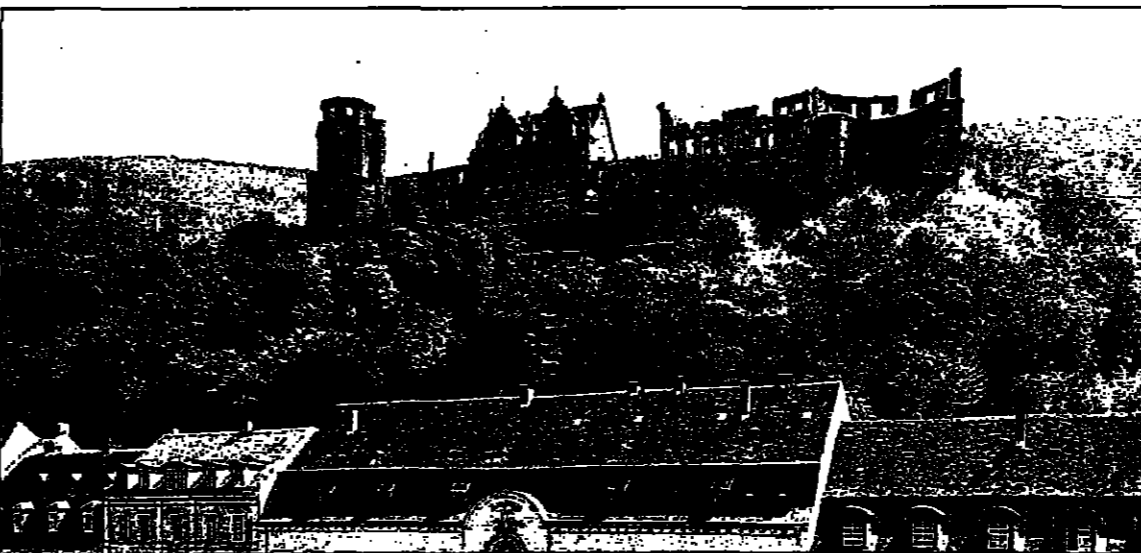
"We got up about half-past six, washed, tied up our bundles, and sat outside in very pale sunshine, having breakfast. About half past eight a customs man rushed out, and said 'Quick - here's a bus going to Cologne.' He picked up our bundles and threw them into the bus, and we got in and off we went."

We were, we discovered, the guests of a Dutch Insurance firm from Eicht on their annual outing. They would stop at Cologne on their homeward way. Meanwhile they were happy to have us along, and to take us with them up into the mountains. Before we left them in the evening we had promised to include Eicht on our route back and see them again. And we did.

So we reached Cologne on the day we'd planned, but not until 8pm - and eventually found a bed (illegally) in the Tbc H Club. And we reached Heidelberg, too. In the Rhine valley there was no place to pitch a tent, and we joined the German youth hostel movement. Some of the hostels were centuries-old buildings, and one or two had been purpose-built for the Hitler Youth Movement, but none provided us with a lodging quite as strange as the one we had that night on the border at Vaals.



Heidelberg in the summer of 1951: top, view over the town; above left, the towers of the Karl-Theodor bridge; above, the old university; left the old castle



EUROPE FOR ZERO

How would today's young and adventurous traveller make the journey to Heidelberg? Probably by air, since it would take the average wage-earner barely a day's labour to buy a plane ticket from London to Frankfurt, the nearest airport to Heidelberg. You can easily hitch-hike from here, since the terminals are conveniently located adjacent to the autobahn - but a train would whisk you to Heidelberg in under two hours, with the total journey costing around £100.

If you insist on travelling on a shoestring, here's how. Forget the bicycle. Instead, start hitching at the Elephant and Castle in London, a half-hour walk from Parliament Square, the West End of the City. Stand opposite the Coronet cinema at the start of the New Kent Road and hop down to Kent on the A20, not the A2.

You need to end up at Folkestone, not Dover, because Le Shuttle carrying Channel Tunnel charge per vehicle rather than per person. Hence drivers are not financially disinclined to pick up hitchhikers.

Stay with your benefactor as deep as he or she goes into France, to avoid the hitchhikers' graveyard that is Calais. The pickings up are much easier in Belgium and Germany.

The advantage that you have over the traveller of the 1950s is that Continental Europe is sans frontières, so you are unlikely to find yourself dropped off just short of border crossings by motorists who fear you could be carrying contraband. So you should reach Aachen, by way of Belgium or even Holland, with few problems. The Vaals border post where Elizabeth Candlish bedded down is these days just a couple of unstaffed offices.

From here it is an easy haul along the Rhine to Bonn and beyond; dodge Frankfurt by taking the route via Mannheim. The going gets stickier (and prettier), once you start striking east through the hills towards the former DDR. The chances are you will arrive in the fine city of Heidelberg in a croaky old Volkswagen Polo driven by a student returning to Germany's classiest university.

Total spent: zero. Result: happiness. When I made the journey, I somehow contrived to make a profit: the driver who dropped me on the "wrong" side of Brussels hurried a Biff100 note after me, saying, correctly, that I probably wouldn't have change for the Metro - fare Bfr50. Thankfully, travelling in Europe is still blessed with the small, human kindnesses that Elizabeth and Margaret experience.

Simon Calder

Childsplay across the Continent

Family breaks abroad can be hell - but not if you know where to go, writes Deborah Jackson

In pursuit of the perfect family-friendly hotel, I've travelled from Cornwall to Inverness, from the wild West (Pembrokeshire) to the remote East (Hythe and the Cinque Ports). But when parents ask me to recommend a decent family hotel abroad, it's not so easy to be specific. Unlike British hostellers who tend to turn their noses up at children, foreign hostellers take them so much for granted they often neglect to cater for them. High chairs are practically unknown across the Continent. Children are expected to wade through miniature versions of their parents' bouillabaisse, or subsist on repetitive junior menus. Kids may be welcome, but bouncy castles are more readily found on a beach than in the grounds of a European hotel.

So the best way to proceed is by word of mouth, and there are some establishments that have offered us - or our friends - the kind of family-oriented holiday we could really sink into and enjoy. For a start, there's the unusual Chateau le Mont Epinguet, a stunning French chateau a mile from the RN13 and eight miles south of the ferry terminal at Cherbourg.

The hosts are an intrepid English couple, Mark and Fiona Berridge, who have two children of their own, plenty of high chairs and a lawn full of bicycles. Once, this 1751 mansion stood in 2,000 acres of its own grounds. Today, three acres do well enough - the wrought-iron gates and magnificent facade are unchanged. Inside, the style is 18th-century faded grandeur, no central heating or carpets but lots of space and a sense of humour.

At Le Mont Epinguet, you get a quasi-Continental B&B (croissants in the summer, porridge in winter), a fantastic social atmosphere with lots of families (English, French, Dutch) and directions to the very handy local eaterie, so small it has no name, in the village of Ruffosse. Here, Madame makes four-course meals on the open fire for Fr60 (£6), pays heed to your children and

takes them off for sweets in her other shop. Mark and Fiona love entertaining families - they can lend you a bike with baby seat, or suggest some super hill walks. Nearby are safe beaches, a popular animal park, exciting indoor pool and a chateau with its own play area. At Fr2650 per week (about £265) for a family room for four (or Fr120 per person per night) it's a highly affordable base for a beautiful and accessible part of France.

Equally relaxed, with a warmer climate, is the

Hostal los Pinos run by Juan Coll and his wife Anna. Their style is laid-back: "You help yourself from the bar and note what you've taken in a book," says Liz. "People tend to go out to eat and return later to gather and chat. There are lots of Brits - some who we've met year after year. One family has been going for 27 years." Not specifically pitched as a family hotel, Los Pinos is nevertheless a favourite with children of all ages. There's a swimming pool, table tennis table, two sandy beaches nearby. The decor is Spanish rustic,

with large pieces of old furniture and plates hanging from whitewashed walls. At 3,000 pesetas (about £12) per person per night for bed and breakfast, Hostal los Pinos is a budget hotel with style. For something a little more organised and inevitably more expensive, try the Theresia Gartenhotel in Austria, a member of the promisingly-named KinderHotels group. The Brettermeier-Egger family promises to "spoil you culinary", which they do with an inclusive price ticket that covers breakfast, dinner, warm buffet at noon, strudels and coffee in the afternoon, use of five swimming and whirlpools, sauna, gym, table tennis and billiards.

Children are an essential part of the exhaustive programme at the Theresia. The owners themselves have three children aged three to 12, so they know what harassed parents are looking for. There's a teenage activity room with videos and computer games, a

kindergarten for over-twos, and a resident nurse. Constructed in Austrian chalet style, the Theresia is a jewel in a verdant, Sound of Music landscape. It leaves you breathless with its range of facilities and level of child catering and has the added advantage of being in the heart of skiing country - imagine bubbling away in the jacuzzi at 37C, with snow stretching from the mountain tops

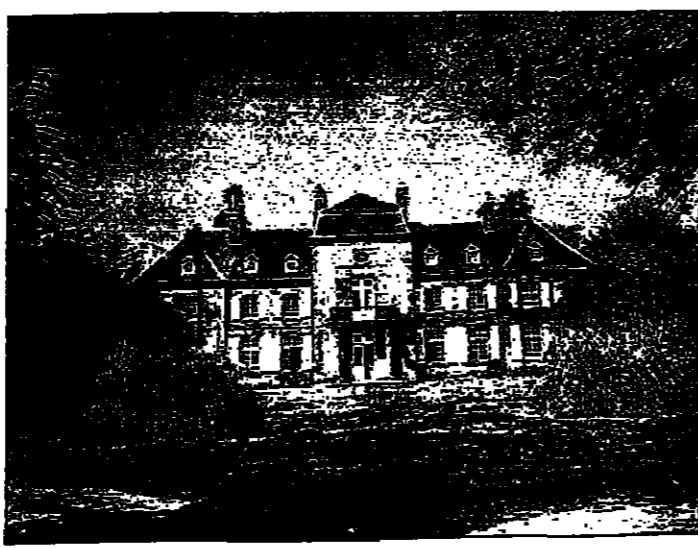
to the very edge of the steaming water...

A simple family room for four on the all-inclusive tariff costs from 1,040 Austrian schillings per person, per night (around £50.) There are reduced rates for children and special offers depending on season. Packages can be booked through Lauda Air, with daily flights from Gatwick to Salzburg.

If you are looking for a wider range of personal recommendations, your best bet might be to talk to a small hotel bookings agency, such as Room

Service, which specialises in family-owned independent hotels in Italy, Spain, France and Portugal. Room Service director Victoria Riela personally visits all the hotels on her books and only deals with non-chain establishments. The company can also arrange flights, car hire and personal itineraries.

Chateau Le Mont Epinguet, 50700 Bré, Normandie (00 33 233 41 96 31). Hostal Los Pinos, Cala San Vicente, Pollensa, Mallorca (00 34 71 33 12 10). Theresia Gartenhotel, A-5754 Saalbach-Hinterglemm 208, Salzburg Land, Austria (00 43 6541 7414). Room Service: 0171-636 6888.



Family chateau: Le Mont Epinguet PHOTOGRAPH: DEBORAH JACKSON

Hostal Los Pinos near Pollensa on the island of Mallorca. "We love it because it's very simple," says Liz Doyle, who has returned numerous times with husband Paddy and various combinations of their three children. "My abiding image of peace and relaxation - walking along the cliff-top opposite the hotel and looking back at the valley bathed in golden light."

THE INDEPENDENT

WIN a set of Modern Classics and a SANYO Actioncam Point and Shoot Palmcorder



Modern Classics is the essential collection for any film buff to add to their library, films which have been selected for their pioneering acting, technical craft and scriptwriting.

This collection includes Raging Bull, 2001 A Space Odyssey, The Defiant Ones, In the Heat of the Night, Midnight Cowboy, Ryan's Daughter, Get Carter, Last Tango in Paris, Annie Hall, Manhattan, Rainman and Thelma and Louise.

We have a full set of twelve videos and a SANYO Actioncam Point and Shoot Palmcorder to win.

Call 0930 525 737

FLIGHTSAVERS

LOW COST AIRFARES WORLDWIDE

From	To	From	To
Amsterdam	£59	Brussels	£69
Copenhagen	£43	Cologne	£75
Düsseldorf	£74	Dublin	£59
Frankfurt	£109	Geneva	£59
Paris	£59	Stockholm	£59
Swiss Lander	£39	Vienna	£59
Zurich	£59	Zurich	£59
Amsterdam	£109	Maastricht	£59
Geneva	£119	Brussels	£59
Amsterdam	£119	Brussels	£59
Amsterdam	£119	Brussels	£59
Amsterdam	£119	Brussels	£59

For all your flight requirements please call 0990 01401. CALL NOW FOR DETAILS OF HUNDREDS MORE BARGAINS. NO CREDIT CARD PURCHASES.

The Honshu shuffle

Simon Calder dodged the bullet and dallied in a corner of Japan a million miles from the mad metropolis

Beyond a certain point, you tell yourself, all travel on a Japan Rail Pass is free. Seven days on the nation's rails cost me £160, which also happens to be the price of the 400-mile round-trip dash between Okayama and Tokyo. As the bullet train ricocheted into Okayama station, I managed to convince myself I was making a profit.

In any list of great travel deals of the world, the Japan Rail Pass would be right up there alongside domestic flights in Ecuador (run by the air force, with fares as low as £5) and the Woolwich Ferry (free, with splendid views of the Thames, the City and Greenwich). But unlike either of these, the rail pass lasts a week and is utterly dependable.

The temptation, though, is to race back and forth along the thousands of high-speed miles of track. Instead, once you have travelled down to Okayama, switch to local trains to shuttle happily and economically between towns and cities in Western Honshu.

Honshu is the heart of the island at the centre of the world's most powerful archipelago. But as soon as you get east of Kobe, the economic miracle vanishes in a puff of morning mist rising timidly from each neat and tidy rice-field. Suddenly 120 million people disappear. Japan abruptly stops being intimidatingly crowded and takes on a human scale.

Previously, Okayama had been a brief blur (I had whizzed through at 130mph on a not-stopping-for-anyone express). But this city, the size of Sheffield, turns out to possess a garden whose formality is matched by its flair. A mile-long, comma-shaped island in the middle of an unremarkable river has been endowed with perfect garden grammar. Every blade of grass, each pebble, all the intrigue of passionately entwined branches seem calculated to reward the visitor whose eyes are fully open.

Paths invite the eye to dance seductively down to the water, which has suddenly attained a new sparkle. Trees reveal a secret semaphore, commanding your vision to appreciate fully the spaces they define. Shrubs, looking as tough as the gravel that washes silently between them, add punctuation to the stream of horticultural consciousness.

And all before eleven. Which is jolly good news, because as a dispensary of fast, tasty and nutritious food, the Japan Railways station buffet cannot be beaten (even by the Ecuadorian air force catering corps and cafés in Woolwich). The sisterly set up is the same wherever you are. A smiling woman, crinkled by time, sits in a booth surrounded by witch-like broths, heaps of spices

and tangles of noodles. In return for £1, she will combine them into an instantly devourable bowlful, prod a pair of chopsticks towards you and enjoy watching your eyes reveal the eager anticipation of your stomach.

All fuelled up, you need somewhere to go. Tourist trails are carved out with a vengeance and a permanence in Japan, which makes it easy to find Kurashiki (20 minutes by implausibly frequent train from Okayama). When Japanese people yearn for a sense of history and culture, they could hop on a plane to Europe. But it is more convenient to make for the closest thing to a tidy Dutch village, and Kurashiki is it.

A canal slides up from the Sea of Japan to this market town. Anywhere else in this high-achieving country, the waterway would have been covered over and the warehouses flattened. What seems to have happened is that an enlightened entrepreneur bought up the site and decided that the warehouses, now empty of rice, could store works of art. A consignment of Impressionists was ordered up, augmented by local and Chinese art, and housed in a Neo-Classical chamber. This stands, without apology for its architectural eccentricity, amid some warehouses whose reflections add gravitas to those of the tearful willows in the canal.

Any surviving sense of profundity is extinguished by the constant sequence of group photos beside one of the more picturesque bridges. Many of the subjects are clutching garish orange and green cones, the preferred colours for serving ice cream hereabouts.

JAPAN JAUNTS

Getting there
Simon Calder paid £873 (including tax) for a ticket on Japan Airlines from Heathrow to Tokyo, returning from Osaka, through the airline's subsidiary Jaltours (0171-495 1775). The fare falls to £849 at the end of August. Lower fares are available on airlines such as Aeroflot (for example through IMS Travel - 0171-224 4678), or as part of a journey to Australia: London-Tokyo-Sydney and back costs less than London-Tokyo return.

Getting around
Jaltours also sold him the rail pass, costing £146 for a week of unlimited travel.

Getting information
Japan National Tourist Organisation, 20 Savile Row, London W1 (0171-734 9638).

Strangely, though, you begin to get sucked in to the notion that the group defines what is and is not an attractive place to visit. Kurashiki is definitely in.

Happily for those still in possession of individuality, the town surrounding the photo-opportunities is warm, friendly and easy to get lost in, especially if you dodge a summer shower by diving into the covered market. Its tentacles extend all over town, spitting you out beside a quiet shrine to pacifism, marked "May peace prevail on Earth".

McDonald's prevails in Kurashiki, as it does in countless Japanese towns and cities. To get away from the nagging encroachment of mass-market mediocrity, just wave the rail pass regally at the ticket collector and clamber on to a train that is only distantly related to rolling stock of the bullet calibre. You ascend from the neon into a plain where pastel colours are toned down a few notches by an overcast sky, presenting a muted version of a Constable landscape. But rather than parish churches, Buddhist shrines are planted in the middle distance.

To make the most of this rural idyll, jump off at Soja station and demand a bicycle. The stationmaster keeps them in his office, and rents them to ticket-holders at £1 an hour.

It would be surprising if many English-speakers have come this way before, though I hope some may do so now. But the cycle route through the Kibi Plain is picked out with polite direction signs in English, steering you across a landscape that man has subdued with the greatest respect. A succession of gentle lanes leads you spinning past ricefields and across streams, then beneath the shadow of hills whose heights are commanded by the elegant arcs of shrines. At one stage the present intervenes with a throaty roar from the traffic on the Sanyo Expressway, but quickly the past gains the upper hand. Kibitsu, the village that donates its name to the plane, is so placid that it could be a Provencal hamlet during the lunchtime lull. The pace of life has slowed to that of a chess-game.

As the peace of the plain is broken by the wheezy old stopping train, just abandon your bike: the stationmaster at Kibitsu collects them up for his pal along the track, and sends them back on the next train home. So you can complete the circle without backtracking yourself.

As a comically archaic and excessively orange local train clanked uncertainly into Okayama, a quick calculation revealed that you could easily have travelled to Nagasaki and back in the time I had devoted to an obscure corner of Japan. But on this day, and any day, better a branch line than a bullet.



The image of industrial Japan evaporates gently in the mist of Honshu's rice fields

PHOTO: MAGNUM

travel • overseas

TEL: 0171 293 2222

FAX: 0171 293 2505

Special Interest Holidays

www.exodus-travel.co.uk

Discovery Walking Overland Biking

UK leaders in small group adventure holidays worldwide. Over 20 years experience, a different brochure.

EXODUS

Small group exploratory holidays you'll see more

- Cultural Tours
- Nature Tours
- Wilderness Safaris
- Easy Hikes
- Major Treks
- Sea Treks
- River Journeys
- Tailship Voyages

Over 170 adventures in Europe, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, Middle East, Africa, India, China, Japan, Asia, Americas, Aus/NZ. 8 days to 6 weeks. Prices from £339 to £3945.

Call for brochure
01252 344161
Aldershot, GU11 1LQ
Fully Bonded ATO/ATOL 2595

EXPLORE

small group exploratory holidays you'll see more

- Cultural Tours
- Nature Tours
- Wilderness Safaris
- Easy Hikes
- Major Treks
- Sea Treks
- River Journeys
- Tailship Voyages

Over 170 adventures in Europe, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, Middle East, Africa, India, China, Japan, Asia, Americas, Aus/NZ. 8 days to 6 weeks. Prices from £339 to £3945.

Call for brochure
01252 344161
Aldershot, GU11 1LQ
Fully Bonded ATO/ATOL 2595

Overseas Travel

MERCURY CABLE & WIRELESS

HERE'S ONE OFFER THAT SHOULD TAKE-OFF.

GUARANTEED CHEAPER CALL BILLS OR DOUBLE YOUR MONEY BACK.

Mercury SmartCall
FreeCall 0500 500 366

Free Mobile Access apply on Mercury SmartCall and UK-Call call. Full, only compared against BT's best rate and standard charges. Excludes: time rental and company promotional offers. Not available on Cable Card or business packages.

Japan

Visit Japan's best kept secrets with a choice of exclusive Guided tours this October

9 days from **£1895**

Full range of Far East Add Ons, City Breaks. Call NOW for details

01703 730830

NEW ENGLAND VACATIONS - Discover the best of New England. Non-stop flights to Boston. Brochure Line: 01727 852811. Fully bonded. ATO/ATOL 1594. ATO/ATOL 2576.

Far East

THE LAST EDEN ON EARTH

7,107 Glorious Islands

THE PHILIPPINES

UNDISCOVERED PARADISE FOR 10 NIGHTS

transfers, two nights at Manila Holiday Inn and 14 days at a Tropical Holiday Resort

from **£685**

inclusive of flights, transfers, two nights at Manila Holiday Inn and 14 days at a Tropical Holiday Resort

from **£185**

from **£80**

SUNIL DISCOVERY Thailand Vietnam. Highly flexible tours and holidays for individuals. 0181-547428 ATO/ATOL 808.

Travel Advertising also appears on page 10.

Australia

BACKPACK TO NATURE

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

FROM £549 RETURN

Go for the wildlife in South Australia. Hop over to Kangaroo Island for the seals, roos and koalas. Get a taste of the Barossa Valley vineyards and chill out in laid back Adelaide. For how to go, where to stay and the lowest fares call or visit Austravel's Great Escape.

0171 584 0202

152 Brompton Road, Knightsbridge, London SW3

Japan

Visit Japan's best kept secrets with a choice of exclusive Guided tours this October

9 days from **£1895**

Full range of Far East Add Ons, City Breaks. Call NOW for details

01703 730830

Africa

South African Affairs Cape Town, Winelands, Garden Route, Natal & Transvaal. A unique selection of classic hotels. Game reserves and glorious horses and gardens. Tel 0171 381 8222.

USA

NEW ENGLAND VACATIONS - Discover the best of New England. Non-stop flights to Boston. Brochure Line: 01727 852811. Fully bonded. ATO/ATOL 1594. ATO/ATOL 2576.

THIS NEWSPAPER AND YOU

If you have a complaint about an item in this newspaper which concerns inaccuracy, intrusion, harassment or discrimination, write to the editor about it.

If you're still dissatisfied you can write to the Press Complaints Commission, an independent organisation established to uphold an editorial Code of Practice for the Press.

THIS NEWSPAPER ABIDES BY THE PCC'S DECISIONS

PC

1 SALISBURY SQUARE LONDON EC4Y 8AE
Telephone 0171 353 1248
Facsimile 0171 353 8355

This paper has been audited by the Press Complaints Commission.

USA & CANADA

East Coast Glory

The Complete Escorted Tour Experience With Our VIP Local Departure Service Offered Free From Over 1100 UK Points On All Dates!

Land of the maple, mountain ash, red oak and scarlet sassafras, among many other wonderful trees and flowering plants; of abundant wildlife and moose-inhabited forests; North America's Eastern Region is a glory largely undiscovered by the casual visitor. Titan's unrivalled 20 year's experience of organising tours to the region takes our clients into the beguiling byways to out-of-the-way villages and true gems of American rural life. Naturally the 'big name' attractions are included in our tours, from Niagara to Boston, but our more leisurely pace and routings provide an entirely different quality experience. And you can be sure that when we visit New York city you will stay at a hotel in midtown Manhattan, where the big attractions, such as Fifth Avenue, Rockefeller Centre, Central Park, Times Square, Grand Central Station and Radio City Music Hall are all literally within strolling distance. The difference is the detail - never more evident than in the East, when we invite you to visit America's 'secret garden'.

EASTERN EXTRAVAGANZA - 15 days from £995*

- Stay in three of Canada's most fascinating cities - Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto.
- Experience the wonder of Niagara Falls.
- Travel the Freedom Road to Lexington where the first shots of the War of Independence were fired.
- Stay in New York, enjoy a city tour and take your own bites of the Big Apple.
- Relax in the cafes and bars of Newport, Rhode Island and visit the spot where the Mayflower landed.

NEW ENGLAND HIGHLIGHTS - 10 days from £875*

- Explore of Harvard University's delightful location at Cambridge.
- Tour of Boston with ample time to make your own discoveries.
- Included visits and admissions to the romantic water-front recreation of Mystic Seaport and Sturbridge's 18th century working village community.

MAPLE LEAF TRAIL PLUS NIAGARA FALLS - 11 days from £945*

- Follow the trail of the greatest concentration of Maple Groves in North America.
- Exploration of the Eastern Townships including North Hadley, Magog, Austin, Bolton, Knowlton and the lovely lakeside villages of Lake Megantic.
- Time to explore the charming environs of Quebec City, with its old walls and fascinating jumble of cobbled streets and leafy squares.
- Two nights in a luxurious central Toronto hotel with a visit to breathtaking Niagara Falls.
- Away from it all stay in the Laurentians at the beautiful resort of Sainte Adele.
- Journey along the stunning Charlevoix coastline with an included whale watching cruise in the St. Lawrence River.

Titan Hitours

Our Service Makes a World of Difference!

To receive your brochure and details of how to book please call our 24 hour brochure hotline or return the completed coupon below. **01737 760033**

*The UK Government imposed Airport Passenger Duty (formerly £10 per person and rising to £20 per person after 1st November 1997) is not included in the prices of these holidays and will be added to your invoice.

Please send information on the following tours: (please tick)

Eastern Extravaganza ☐ New England Highlights ☐ Maple Leaf Trail ☐
USA ☐ Canada ☐ Australasia ☐ South Africa ☐ Thailand ☐ Europe ☐ Cruise & Tour ☐

Name _____
Address _____
Postcode _____

Titan Travel Ltd., Hitours House, 26-30 Holmesthorpe Avenue, Redhill, Surrey RH1 2NL.

OFFICE OPENING HOURS
Monday to Friday 9am-7pm
Saturday 9am-5pm
Sunday 9.30am-5pm

152 Brompton Road, Knightsbridge, London SW3

Bright lights, big city

It used to be dominated by unflappable fleets of cyclists. Now the multi-lane highway – and the Big Mac – have come to Shanghai, writes

Patrick Conner

In its great old days, when the lavatories were imported from Britain and Noel Coward was in residence, the Peace Hotel in Shanghai was the last word in cosmopolitan sparkle. Now in the gloomy foyer there stands a Multi-media Information Kiosk. At the touch of a button we learn that, in Coward's day, the hotel was called the Cathay – or, as the Kiosk endearingly describes it, the Cathy – and that it was once voted "most famous hotel in the world".

Yet nostalgia cuts little ice in modern Shanghai. Like the other pre-war hotels of the city – the Park, which was the tallest building in the Far East, and the grandly-porticoed Pacific – the Peace Hotel has been overtaken in the race to attract the new upmarket business clientele. The Shanghaiese have always regarded themselves as a cut above other Chinese in style and the ability to make money. When they look at the rapid rise of Hong Kong, they attribute it not so much to Western savvy as to the enterprise of the many Chinese who came from Shanghai to Hong Kong after 1949, and who in several cases created colossal fortunes. Now that Hong Kong has been placed on a (nearly) equal footing with the rest of China, will not Shanghai soon rival, and indeed eclipse, the former British colony?

This question has been much debated recently in the Hong Kong press, and it springs to mind again as one looks from the Peace Hotel's once-glimmering dining room at the new Shanghai across the Huangpu River. The last time I sat here, seven years ago, the eastern district of Pudong was a nondescript suburb; now its Oriental Pearl TV Tower dominates the city, and around it have sprouted a group of spectacular buildings which resemble the dust-jacket of a sci-fi novel.

The Peace Hotel stands on the Bund, the long, curving embankment that was first developed by the British in the middle of the 19th century. Shanghai is not ashamed of its semi-colonial past. It has preserved the imposing bank and hotel buildings along the Bund; these great grey relics, built in styles varying from Harrods Baroque to orientalist Deco, have been designated historic monuments; and the British-looking bronze lions which once guarded the entrance to the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank may now be admired in the Shanghai Museum of History.

Yet even the Bund has had to change. The quayside itself has recently been raised to form a pedestrian walkway, while the road along the Bund has become a 12-lane highway. At the northern end the road is about to sweep up over the old French settlement, to be linked with a concrete network of overhead highways, in an attempt to ease the city's monstrous congestion.

In every sense, cars are in the ascendant. Private vehicles are still scarce, but the streets are now ruled by taxis. Formerly the balance of power lay with armies of cyclists, who, after a volley of blasts from a driver's horn, might change direction by a few degrees, like a lake ruffled by a gentle breeze. Yet now the taxi driver may accelerate directly towards an oncoming column

of cyclists, scattering them to right and left.

There isn't much that you can't buy in Shanghai. On Fangbang Street in the old city you can pick up aged eggs, skinned ducks and lop-eared puppies. My own most satisfying purchase, for about £1, was a foldaway battery-driven potato-peeler. I feel confident that back home in Herne Hill, this gadget will place us at the cutting edge of culinary style.

The Bond Street of Shanghai is Nanjing Dong Lu (once known as Bubbling Well Road), where, it is said, the traffic has only once been halted – for the shooting of Spielberg's *Empire of the Sun*. The ground floor of the old East Asia Hotel is now a clothing store: the mannequins are Western, with sharp noses and blond hair, although, less predictably, the tips of the male mannequins are purple. A few yards down, a fine old Sino-classical building with giant columns is shared by McDonald's and Pizza Hut.

But it's not all burgers and fizzy pop. Culture is alive and well, both Chinese and Western. "Shanghai Spring" was the title of the May music festival, with events ranging from a piano recital in honour of Beethoven, to *Let's Pull Together* by the Hangzhou Comedy Troupe. In the middle of

People's Square stands the city's great showpiece, the new Shanghai Museum. In front of it, elderly couples waltz beside fountains flanked by ceremonial bronze urns; as the visitor approaches, he or she becomes aware of a mellow rendering of "The Blue Danube" issuing from the depths of the urns.

Thus soothed, you enter the museum. The new displays are truly splendid – informative, varied, stimulating. I was privileged to eat lunch in the museum staff canteen: copious quantities of soup, rice, scrambled egg and salty meat. Despite being the only Westerner there, I scarcely received a second glance from the staff (the Shanghaiese have no doubt seen more than enough Westerners during the last 150 years), although I think my elderly briefcase attracted one or two pitying stares.

If the new museum is a haven of tranquillity, elsewhere one is constantly reminded that Shanghai contains 13 million people in an area appreciably smaller than London. The traditional gardens of Yu Yuan must be the most crowded gardens on earth; the pavilions have names like "Hall of Peaceful Contemplation", but there's not much chance of that. The antique market outside the old city is a good deal more relaxing. Here I nearly bought a stylish pair of 1940-vintage Chinese spectacles; Qing Dynasty, the stallholder assured me.

If anyone doubts the Shanghaiese awareness of the outside world, they have only to watch the giant video screen in People's Square. As night fell, I watched as Clinton and various Chinese leaders came and went, each of them 50ft tall and portrayed in vivid hyper-colour. I lingered in case of a glimpse of British leaders. My patience was finally rewarded by a newflash from Manchester. No politicians were in view, however: it was the final of the world table-tennis championship. The winner, of course, was China.

There are no direct flights between the UK and Shanghai. Austrian Airlines has a flight via Vienna, which Travelmood (0171-258 0280) is offering for £509 return, including tax. Other options are available from Regent Holidays (0117 9211711). British passport holders need a Chinese visa, obtainable through the China Travel Service, 7 Upper St Martin's Lane WC2H 9DL, (0171-836 3688).



Will Shanghai become the new Hong Kong? The Pudong district, left, and the Pearl TV tower, bottom left. PHOTOGRAPHS: MAGNUM

The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education

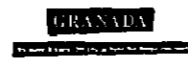
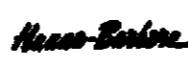
Higher Education in the learning society

Report of The National Committee

THE WHITE PAPER ON HIGHER EDUCATION IS NOT ALL BAD NEWS. MR BLUNKETT FORGOT TO MENTION THE FREE CDS, VIDEOS & BURGERS.

For over £125 off CDs, videos, burgers and much more, take part in The Independent's '£2.5 Million Student Passport to Independence' competition. To enter, just get an entry form from Which Way? magazine, free with the paper on 13th August, and collect 7 tokens from The Independent and Independent on Sunday from the 14th August. 20,000 booklets available. Open to UCAS applicants only.

THE INDEPENDENT



No purchase necessary. Tokens available from The Independent offices.

WORLD COVER
ANNUAL TRAVEL INSURANCE
CALL US ON 0800 365 121

37 760033

Haven on earth

Jack O'Sullivan discovers how Britain's urban parks are being rescued from dereliction

The Temple, a sandstone Georgian folly once visited by Wellington, Disraeli and General Tom Thumb, is a grand romantic gesture. Perched on the highest point of the 640-acre Heaton Park, one of Europe's largest urban public spaces, it looks down over central Manchester and speaks of gentler times. But the view has changed since the park was the pride and joy of Mancunians. The park's centrepiece, Heaton Hall, built in 1772 for the Earls of Wilton and one of the finest examples of a Wyatt country house, is boarded up. Two huge lions, cast in lead by John Cheere, which once adorned the entrance and fascinated generations of children, have been removed to protect them from further vandalism. Other buildings are derelict, no-go areas to the public.

It's a familiar story – a great urban park, hard won by the Victorians, left to ruin by their great-grandchildren. We didn't notice until it was almost too late to save places which, in their heyday, were where many people spent their summer holidays. Typically, decline in parks like this one dates from the Second World War, when the cast-iron railings were sacrificed to the war effort; parks could no longer be secured at night. After the war, planners were more interested in spending on slum clearance and new roads. Le Corbusier's

Modernism was not interested in ornate, decorated landscapes. While rural areas enjoyed the protection of the Countryside Commission, urban spaces were abandoned to blighted obscurity. After all, why bother with Heaton Park on the north side of Manchester, when you could drive to the Pennines?

Then parks' departments disappeared into council "Leisure Services", their horticultural expertise and political clout lost, leaving the parks starved of funding as sports centres got the cash. Abolition of park-keepers, victims of compulsory competitive tendering, was an almost fatal blow. They were replaced by unaccountable outside contractors, charged with mowing the grass once a fortnight and dumping wood chippings around the roses. Municipal neglect was matched by

vandalism, which, once left unrepaired, grew in its destructiveness.

For Hazel Conway, author of three books on Britain's urban parks, the decline of the People's Park in Halifax symbolised the tragedy. "A whole row of statues on the terrace had to be enclosed in hardboard to prevent them being vandalised. Yet, even then, they were still damaged." For the general public, the murder of Rachel Nickell on Wimbledon Common evoked a sense that many parks were no longer safe.

But this dismal tale is drawing to a close. We are witnessing a great revival of the British urban park. The Temple at Heaton Park has been carefully restored, its stone interior marble fireplace and simple oak floor once more a resting place for walkers, not simply winos. The outside of the Hall,

which has a cupola as its main room, decorated in Etruscan style, will soon be renovated. Inside, the British Folk Art exhibition is already on display. The elegant Orangery, until recently a shabby shell of its former glory, is now a restaurant, catering for weddings. A new pavilion has been built for the golf course. A kitchen garden has been developed, and an aromatic garden for the blind is planned. Derelict buildings are due for demolition. The park is now locked at night and hundreds of new litter bins are regularly emptied. The greens at Heaton Park will host the lawn bowls competitions for the Commonwealth Games in 2002.

Two factors explain the turnaround – £3.4m allocated from the National Lottery (plus matching council funding) and the appointment of a park manager, Theresa Grant, a tough-minded Irish

Paradise regained: the Temple at Manchester's Heaton Park is restored to its former glory
PHOTOGRAPH: NIGEL HILLIER/UNP

woman, is now in charge at Heaton Park, given responsibilities previously divided between several council departments but assigned to no-one in particular. "There is an enormous amount of good-tidiness," she says, "which I can focus. The will to park, for example, means that when the contractors come to mow a section of the park, they don't cut the meadow while the wild orchids are flowering."

"I have also been able to make sure that when the trenches are being dug in the park for the introduction of closed-circuit television, we will not have to go through the same disruption again. Water mains, fibre-optic cables and electricity cables will all be in the same trench for future use."

Ms Grant has changed the rota for cleaning and litter picking so that most work is done in the evening, making the park safer and ensuring that it is clean each morning. "If the public see it litter-free when they arrive, they are more likely to tidy themselves." Soon the lions will return, once proper security has been introduced.

This is just the beginning for Dr Stewart Harding, team leader of the Urban Parks Programme for the Heritage and Lottery Fund, which is inviting bids from 2,500 parks. Some £70m has already been allocated and a similar amount will soon be available. He would like to see an Urban Green Agency established and made responsible for town parks, each with a manager like Theresa Grant. "For too long," he says, "parks have been seen as a problem, rather than being recognised as a vital component of an urban area. We will soon see them again, as the Victorians did, as the jewel in the crown of every town."

Refuge of pirates and puffins

Lundy is tiny, so you can do its circular walk quite quickly, perhaps using your new sea-gait. By Sally Kindberg

Lundy is an elusive island floating tantalisingly off the north coast of Devon. A former refuge of rebels, pirates and smugglers, it lies below the Bristol Channel, its western shore pummeled by the Atlantic.

At Bideford I set sail on the charming 1950s MS Oldenburg for the 23-mile voyage to the island, which I had last seen earlier in the summer shimmering in a violet heat-baze.

Today was different. The wind was gusting a brisk damp south-westerly as we chugged down the river Torridge from Bideford. Once out to sea the ship developed an idiosyncratic roll-and-shudder movement soon imitated by some of the 260 passengers. Kindly and efficient crew members handed out paper bags and napkins then wrapped the most queasy passengers in fluffy blankets and stowed them gently down below. Someone told me it wasn't always so – this was her 13th trip to Lundy.

Enormous basking sharks began to accompany us, slapping plankton, and I was glad not to be one of the many passengers with Martini complexion leaning precariously over the ship's rail.

After three hours the island appeared, weighed down by sea mist. Lundy's landing place on the sheltered eastern shore by Rat Island (last refuge of the British black rat) is only accessible by small craft. Curious seals bobbed out of the water as we disembarked by launch and rubber dinghy.

The heaving sea trip meant that time

on dry land before the return journey was limited. On the slaty beach I headed right, up a steep path underneath dark cliffs held in place (hopelessly) with giant metal pins, and bordered by hairy Lundy cabbage.

Using my newly acquired rolling sea-gait, I soon passed Millcombe House. Built with Jamaican sugar money in 1835 for the pious Heaven family, its roof, sloping inward to catch precious rain-water, is an early example of ecological soundness. This house, like 22 other properties on Lundy (including one lighthouse) is maintained and administered by the Landmark Trust, and can be rented from them.

I followed the track to the village curving up to the left. A sharp left takes you to the 13th-century Marisco Castle, built as a fortress by Henry III after he had executed the rebellious William de Marisco who used Lundy as his hideaway.

I continued past the Victorian Gothic church of St Helena's on the left, walking across turf that was curiously bouncy. That, and my nautical gait, was having a strange effect on my progress.

Dome-shaped structures loomed out of the mist swirling in a field on my left. Disappointingly, what I had hoped was a Celtic encampment in a time-warped turned out to be the Tent Field. The

naked legs of its inhabitants were not those of some ancient tribe but the rain-wet limbs of stalwart British campers roughing it and loving every moment.

Further on, the shrill squealing of pigs quarrelling behind a fence sent me hurrying for the shelter of the Marisco Tavern. Its warm, dark interior is hung with the lifebelts of ships that never quite made it. Lundy is the site of 137 shipwrecks.

The weather cleared a little and I headed north again, enticed by visions of puffins with striped beaks, and images of guillemots' eggs, a former Lundy delicacy, bright blue and almost conical (they don't roll off ledges).

I passed the Lundy Shop, which sells everything, including Lundy's own postage stamps. "Puffinage" was introduced in 1929 by the then owner of the west is the Old Light, a sturdy lighthouse designed by Daniel Alexander, architect of Dartmoor prison. Built in 1820, it is now divided into flats for visitors, and has an uninterrupted view of the Atlantic. Unless it's foggy.

Further on the left is a farm on whose land two giant skeletons (over 8ft long) were discovered in the 1850s, hidden under granite and slate slabs. Over to the west is the Old Light, a sturdy lighthouse designed by Daniel Alexander, architect of Dartmoor prison. Built in 1820, it is now divided into flats for visitors, and has an uninterrupted view of the Atlantic. Unless it's foggy.

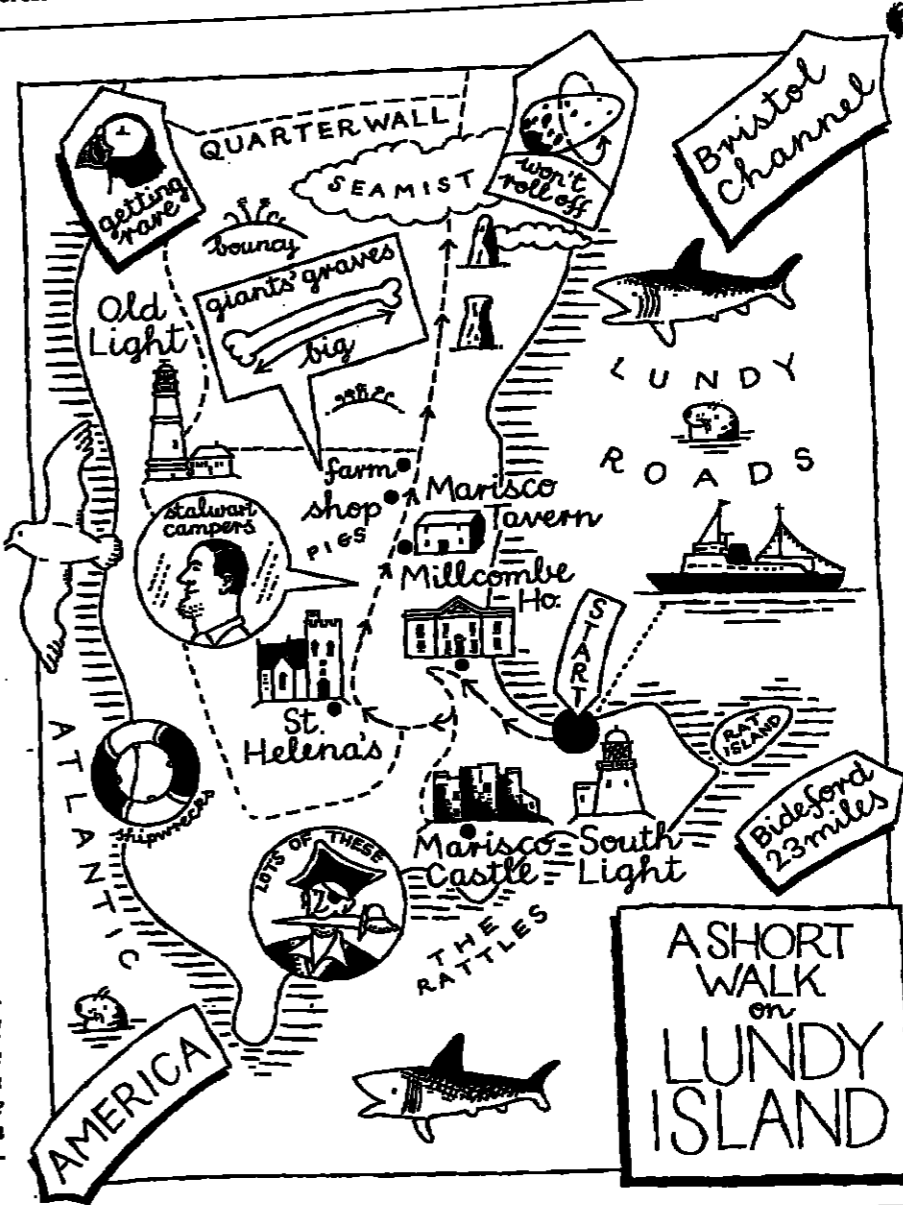
The South Light fog-warning bellowed mournfully as I continued north. On my right were man-sized marker stones shawled with mist. Beyond them were the watery Lundy Roads, a safe haven for ships trying to shelter from the prevailing westerly winds.

The Oldenburg would soon be setting off for the mainland, so I headed back. Given a little more time, however, you can complete the circular walk – Lundy is only three miles long and half a mile wide. I must have walked a little under two miles but I had had no realistic sense of scale, and time had passed far too quickly. I knew I would have to come back to this intriguing island.

Eventually I joined other passengers, their cheeks now healthily flushed, streaming back to the landing bay. Below us was the Oldenburg floating on a calmer sea, ready to sail with the tide.

Directions
Once on the island take the path to the right, past Millcombe House and follow track to left and right again. St Helena's church is on left. Follow track through village and head north towards Quarter Wall.

The MS Oldenburg sails from Bideford or Ilfracombe in Devon. Lundy maps and information (and puffin stamps) are available on board. The boat leaves with the morning tide, returning with the evening tide. Prices: adults £24, children £12 for the round trip. Sailing information 01237 470422.



THE INDEPENDENT Sensational Amaryllis

for £7.95 each inc p&p

This selection of Giant Amaryllis is the cream of the crop from Holland. Amaryllis lovers are often disappointed when buying beautifully packaged bulbs from stores, as the picture shows three stems and unbelievable giant heads whereas the bulbs produce only a single stem or possibly two. The bulbs supplied from this offer are the size used for the sensational pictures - the size of a three year old child's head they cannot fail to please when in bloom.

There are three wonderful varieties to choose from: Apple Blossom - a delicate pink and white, Red Lion - a velvety deep red and Monarch - red and white stripes. One bulb will cost you just £7.95 or you can choose to buy a pack of three bulbs, one of each of the varieties for just £19.95 inc p&p.

BULBS WILL BE DESPATCHED FROM EARLY SEPTEMBER ONWARDS.

Please send me Amaryllis(s) at £7.95 per bulb

Variety: ☐ Apple B. ☐ Red L. ☐ Monarch

Please send me ☐ Pack(s) of 3 Amaryllis at £19.95 per pack

I enclose my cheque/PO (address on back) made payable to: Newspaper Publishing (NGS) Ltd, or please debit my

Access/Visa/Mastercard account with the sum of £

My card number is:

Please use BLOCK CAPITALS. Expiry date:

Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Ms/Ms):

Address:

Postcode:

Signature:

Orders to: THE INDEPENDENT AMARYLLIS OFFER, PO BOX 64, SOUTH WEST DISTRICT OFFICE, MANCHESTER M16 9HY.

Please tick this box if you do not wish to receive future mailings from NEWS-PAPER PUBLISHING PLC or from companies approved by NEWS-PAPER PUBLISHING PLC

Reg. in England 1902667 Newspaper Publishing plc

I do not usually have much time for townspeople who come out to live in villages and then complain about the noise and smells. Immigrants to the country must expect cows to bellow, donkeys to bray, tractors to roar, chain-saws to scream and silage clamps to stink like the effluent from hell.

Peacocks, however, are something else. The aggravation they cause in a class of its own, and I cannot help feeling sorry for the people of Avebury who are being driven demented by the four birds – property of the National Trust – that roam the Wiltshire village.

A long-term peacock-owner myself, I know how the sufferers feel; and experience has taught me that it is unfair all round to keep such large birds, which are only half-domesticated, in any environment shared by humans.

Once you have seen peacocks in their natural state, you cannot contemplate incarcerating them in any form of cage, however large. Nor can you pinion them, to stop them flying, because they must roost aloft to be safe from foxes. Essentially birds of the jungle, they need a tremendous amount of space to flourish; and if they are allowed to roam free in any village, they are bound to cause intense vexation.

It was trips to India and Nepal that encouraged us to take on peacocks. I shall never forget an afternoon spent darting rhinos in the Terai, the plain south of the Himalayas. As our elephants crunched through the scrub, huge birds exploded in bomb-bursts of five or six, climbing steeply against the



Duff Hart-Davis

Immigrants to the country must expect cows to bellow, donkeys to bray and chain-saws to scream. But peacocks are something else ...

dazzling white backdrop of eternal snow peaks on the northern horizon.

In England, our first three birds were two hens and a male whom my wife named Shalimar. We were then living in the Chilterns, and the farm was so isolated that there was nobody in earshot to be tormented by the brazen screeches of "Ay-ORRRR, Ay-ORRR" which Shalimar continually trumpeted out in spring.

We ourselves suffered most from free-lance avian gardening. Facing the flowerbeds, endlessly inquisitive, the peacocks would nip off bud after bud, eating some but dropping most of them disdainfully to the ground. Whenever they decided to take a dust-bath in the vegetable patch, it was curtains for whole crops, young or old.

Mercifully perhaps, our flock never increased much. The hens nested in the nettles behind the farmyard, but cats or foxes got most of the chicks, and Shalimar, driven, no doubt, by the instinct to preserve his personal supremacy – revealed a distressing propensity for murdering his own offspring.

So it was that when we moved to our present home in 1985 we still had only four birds. Catching them for transportation was a saga in itself, but we managed it by fixing up the door of a stable with a long draw-string, luring the peacocks inside along a trail of corn, and yanking the trap shut from a distance.

After being driven down the M4 in individual hessian sacks, they soon took to their new surroundings. But here, though again out in the sticks,

we lack the final degree of isolation. A lane runs past the house, and we have one neighbour, a keen and skilful gardener.

It was one thing for passers-by to gawp in admiration as Shalimar displayed on the terrace, with 100 violet eyes glaring from the iridescent green of his fanned-out tail feathers; quite another when our neighbour's rows of newly-sown carrots were left looking like an exhibit in the Imperial War Museum – a relief model of the battle of the Somme, all mounds and craters.

One spring, our surviving female hatched out three male chicks, and when these all grew into strapping teenagers, we decided that the family must go. They were taken on by kind friends in Oxfordshire – but there they created even worse havoc than with us.

Decamping across country into the nearest village, they took up residence in trees around the graveyard and split the community, exactly as in Avebury. One faction demanded their immediate removal or extermination; the other threatened to prosecute anyone who laid a finger on them.

Here, Shalimar lived on for a year in solitary splendour, sometimes doing no mean damage to visiting cars, in whose gleaming paintwork he discerned phantom rivals.

Eventually, one winter dawn, a fox got him in the orchard; and unless I win the Lottery, so that I can buy a stately home in the middle of a 500-acre park, I do not think we shall ever replace him.

More noisy neighbours on page 22

Cocktails: get the taste of summer	20
Under the Counter	20
Motoring: Gavin Green meets the man from the RAC.....	21

A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a vintage car, possibly a 1930s model, with a cartoon character inside. The character has a large head, wide eyes, and a mustache, and is wearing a dark suit. The car is parked on a street, and the background shows a building with a chimney and a cloudy sky. The image has a grainy, high-contrast quality, similar to a photocopy or a stylized graphic.

Ann Widdecombe (age 48)
Occupation: MP
Read: "Every one" of Blyton's books.
Favourite Series: Mallory Towers (set in a girls' boarding school). They were really exciting.
Favourite character: Big Ears – he was endearing.
Influence? They encouraged me to read, read and read. The best stimulus to a child's mind is the development of an active imagination in a creative, yet structured form – enter Enid Blyton.
Politically correct? I loved my golliwog. Would you/have you bought Blyton for your own or other children? Yes.

Clare Short (age 51)
Occupation: Secretary for International Development
Read: Quite a few I think of the Famous Five and Secret Seven. They were an easy read but I had lots of other books as well. My favourite characters are George the tumbler, [Georgina of the Famous Five], I think like many women I identified with the more independent-minded girl character.
Influence? Not a lot.
Politically correct? My upbringing celebrated all the values that are now described as politically correct; they were, and are, strong in me. I didn't object to Enid Blyton, but I did recognise that the books were a bit trivial, but I still enjoyed reading them.
Would you/have you bought Blyton for your own or other children? Probably not. I wouldn't ban them, but I feel that there are other, perhaps better, books available.

George Player (age 48) **Occupation:** Features Editor for *Period House* magazine
Read: *Famous Five*.
Favourite series: *Famous Five*, they were good adventure stories.
Favourite character: Probably one of the boys.
Influence? The *Famous Five* had good action holidays. My children I hope have had something of the same, but with pretend rather than real-life baddies. I finally stopped reading *End* *Bluton* books

Politically correct? My memory is that the children seemed normal, natural and polite. The politically correct aspect of some children's books today is so laboured that it overpowers the storyline. **Would you have you bought Bytton for your own or other children?** Yes.

Fern Britton (age 39)
Occupation: Currently presenter of *Ready, Steady Cook*
Read: All the adventure and mystery stories plus school books such as Malory Towers
Favourite series: The adventure and mystery ones. I loved the gripping nature of them – honestly! They left me totally spellbound. I identified with all the characters, and I also loved the fact that adults didn't interfere.
Influence: They created a huge extra dimension to my childhood, a childhood shared with the characters. They were my adventures, too.
Politically correct? No.
Would you/have you bought Blyton for your own or other children? Yes.

Gifta Gakpeto (age 32)
Occupation: Law graduate, from Ealing, Middlesex, working in Intellectual Property protection.
Read: Famous Five and Secret Seven at home in Ghana.
Favourite series: The "Adventure" series. I loved the suspense and the tension the stories created.
Influence: It enlightened me, and showed me how other kids behaved and reasoned. Politically correct? No.
Would you/have you bought Blyton for your own or other children? Yes.

Maria Savva (age 24)
Greek, grew up in Haringey.
Occupation: Economics PhD student.
Read: Twenty Minute Stories, later the Famous Five.
Favorite Series: While the stories for younger children drew me in as a Blyton fan, when it came to the series written for older children the love affair with Blyton was over.
Politically correct? The characters did not seem exotic enough to be truly exciting, yet they were far enough removed from my life and experience growing up in

Haringey so that I could just not identify with them. They were just too middle-class for my liking.

Would you have you bought Blyton for your own or other children? No.

Andrew Davenport (age 31)

Occupation: Writer and co-creator of the television programme *The Teletubbies*.

Read: *The Adventure of the Wishing Chair* and *The Secret Seven*.

Favourite series: *Secret Seven*.

Favourite character: *The Wishing Chair* was a personal favourite – an ordinary dining room chair that could grow wings and fly.

Influence? For my generation books by Blyton were often the first books that were engaging, as well as being cheap, readily available and easy to read. I think she deserves credit for introducing thousands of children to independent reading.

Politically correct? I remember being slightly baffled by the fact that characters always went away to school and had very large gardens and playrooms, but I don't think as a child you really question this. I think you're far too preoccupied with the notion of a chair that might be able to fly than with social issues.

Would you/have you bought *Bylton* for your own or other children? Yes. I don't see why not. Children's culture has boomed in recent years and there is a lot more to choose from and I am not sure that *Bylton* would be at the top of a list. I certainly would not prevent a child from reading any book they found fulfilling.

Charles Kennedy (38)
Occupation: Agricultural and Rural Affairs spokesperson, Liberal Democrat Party.
Read: The Famous Five, Malory Towers and the Secret Seven series.
Favourite Series: Secret Seven. The mystery plots and all the detail appealed to me.
Influence: I would say that her books added to my imagination. I ultimately stopped reading them because they all belonged to my elder sister and she outgrew them.
Politically correct? Some of the references in her books were decidedly middle-class English, and thus alien to me as a Scot.
Would you/have you bought *Bylton* for your own or other children? Yes.

FAX: 0171 293 2505

[illegible]


EROTIC PRINTS

Our 80-page, fully-illustrated colour catalogue is the key to a forbidden world of passionate works by artists of both fame and promise.

Send £5.00 cheque (to 'EPS') or Mastercard-Visa details to: EPS (dept ITF), PO Box 10645, LONDON SW16 9ET

tel 0171-351 6957
fax 0171-244 8999

THE *Erotic* Print Society



To advertise in this section please call the
Independent Traders Team
on **0171 293 2344**.

FREE
PERSONAL PLEASURE PRODUCTS CATALOGUE
 (describes for men and women the latest in adult toys developed in 1979) and largest range of specialty items.
 Pleasure Products: Electrostimulators, Vibrators and Fantasy Play with the complete range of genital and anal toys. Includes a full range of adult magazines and books.
0131 654 5455
 (Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30, Sat 10-5)
FREE
TEXT ADULT PLEASURE PRODUCTS
 CHANDLER'S Hall has LOWE TOYS' famous SEX TOYS - RUBBERS - WEAPONS - LEATHER - WHIPS - CHAINS AND SPRAYS plus MUCH MORE!
 Call 0131 654 5455 for a FREE CATALOGUE
 or write to: CHANDLER'S, 100, N. BRISTOL ST., GLASGOW G1 1TA



Fashion

**Pure Silk
Luxury Robe**

**Suitable
for Men &
Women**

Made of luxury
weight pure silk.
Finished with a
sheer collar, two
large pockets, a tie
belt and full length
sleeves. Enjoy the
comfort and feel of
relaxing in a pure
silk robe at an
affordable price.

Available in 4 plain
colours: White, Black, Royal and Navy,
or in Paisley Patterns with Navy or White
background. Fully machine washable.
Money back guarantee if not delighted.

Source: S. M. L.



**FREE PINK
WELLINGTON
ROBE**

\$29.95
or \$9.95 for 2
Source: B. J. L.

**Ring door on our
24 HOUR HOTLINE
& BROCHURE HOTLINE
0171 2743387**

**WOMEN BATH ROBE, FRESHOP,
P.O. Box 3430, London SE23 3JF**

**Men's Bath Robe, Freshop,
P.O. Box 3, Chislehurst, Kent DA2 5JF**

HATCHBAG BOOTWEAR

the ORIGINAL solution to dirty boot problems



An effective way to keep the
luggage area of your car in top
condition. A sturdy hardwearing
and waterproof inner lining that is
simple to fit, easy to remove and
fold away. Tailormade for over 250
hatchback and estate vehicles.
From only £28.95 inc VAT.

SLIPOVER SEAT COVERS

Top quality waterproof front seat
covers made from coated nylon
fabric, easy to fit and remove.
Available in 3 sizes to fit most
vehicles. Also fully tailored seats
available for most 4x4 vehicles.
From only £28.95 per pair inc
VAT.

24 HOUR BROCHURE HOTLINE
0151 639 5396

UNIT 4 MILLBROOK RD, WEST PLATA, NO ESTATE, BIRKENHEAD

Fashion

Diabetes? Circulation problems? Varicose veins?

HJ SOFTOP SOCKS

The Original No Elastic Sock

Exerts no pressure on the calves and leave no
irritating rings or marks

Wool rich (60%) or Cotton rich (65%)
Sizes, 6-11 or 11-13 in Black, Dark Grey, Navy
or Cotton.

Minimum Order 3 Pairs £9.60.

Available by post from **COUNTRY THREADS**
8 The Gate House, Rake, Liss, Hants.
GU33 7JH

Telephone 01329 810000

HJ

Experts who can tell the winners from the dogs

It's a long way from the catwalk to the High Street. Linda Watson reports on the fashion buyers



From catwalk to high street shop, via the fashion buyer. Deirdre Kelly, above, is fashion director for Brown Thomas, a Dublin department store

MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: MAXWELLS

once met a fashion buyer who hadn't slept for a month. He wasn't ill, or jet lagged. He hadn't been harassed, divorced or bereaved. He was en route to a nervous breakdown with bags the size of Vuitton trunks under his eyes because he had been to a fashion show and hadn't bought a particular style of white shirt.

No wonder some buyers are on edge: sitting either side of the catwalk, separated by a pristine oblong, the odd supermodel, and a air of nervous tension are two types of people: one tells us what to wear, the other puts their money where their mouth is. Fashion pundits can say what they like: black is the new navy, lures is better than velvet, or Harry Hill's shirts are the best thing since sliced bread. When it comes to human beings in designer labels, the buck stops with one: the buyer who decided to buy the collection in the first place. "I understand pretty well the motives of the press," says Josephine

Turner, co-owner of the Knightsbridge designer emporium A La Mode. "Fundamentally, the aims are the same but the difference is that they are translating their thoughts into photographs and ink. Women think this is what's happening and that's an end to it. Buyers are the people who have to sell it. Ultimately, our responsibility is far greater."

The main purpose of a fashion show is to launch a two-pronged attack on the purse strings: first, generate the publicity. Next, get the sales. Often, the two are mutually massaging. Occasionally they exist in solitary confinement. Which is why the snakeskin jacket with Quasimodo shoulders, or the hat with horns growing out the side may have a starring role in your glossy catwalk report, but rest assured, there's only one of them - and it's staring at you from the page. "You can pretty much spot the winners from the dogs," says Liz McCarthy, Fashion Director at Selfridges. "There are many looks

that are just done for the show. Even with the more wearable ones, there is room for manoeuvre: you know instinctively if a dress ends up around the bum on the catwalk, it will be a decent length when you buy it."

Fashion buyers do far more than just buy clothes. They choose colours, sizes, quantities and shapes. They need to know what will go with what, who goes where, and which labels will live happily as next-door neighbours on the shop floor. With budgets from £30,000 per season for small independents to millions for department stores, they must know what went cold last season and what's about to be hot. The composite fashion buyer would be part psychic, part gambler, a walking advertisement for designer style with the psychological make-up of Paul McKenna and John McCrick. "We always say 90 per cent success, 10 per cent sale rate," says Deirdre Kelly, Fashion Director at Brown Thomas, a beautiful Dublin department

store which sells Prada, Armani and Gucci to locals and to celebrity residents of Paddywood. Ask buyers the burning question - how to pick stars from thousands of potentials - and they echo the same sentiment: it's not enough to have good taste - you need to put yourself in the position of the customer. "You are on the road to disaster if you choose your own personal taste," says Liz McCarthy. "Obviously, it plays a part, but it's a case of keeping your eyes open, listening to feedback from the press, trusting your gut feeling. You can't get too emotive about it." Josephine Turner agrees. "Sometimes I might see a dress which is absolutely exquisite but I don't buy it because it will be too difficult to sell. Being beautiful isn't everything: it just won't fit into any lifestyle."

According to one model who has seen them in action, "There are two breeds of buyer: the quite eccentric, quirky woman who has a little shop in the counties, has

a zany way of putting things together and often buys for specific customers in mind. Then there is the department-store buyer. The British will arrive with one assistant and a laptop. The New York contingent are more like the Mafia, with 10 assistants and an unwritten rule that everyone knows their place - even down to who holds the Polaroids."

For some buyers, the task is more complicated. Claire Locke co-owns Artigiano, a mail-order company which sells Italian clothes to British women. She never sees her customers in the flesh. "Selling via a shop is completely different. If you see a fabric you like you can touch it, feel it. With a catalogue, there is a lot of trust involved."

Consider the case of Susan Whiteley. As Buying Director for Harvey Nichols, she scours the collections for tasty designer morsels, but has to put another head on when buying for Leeds. "In London, we have quite a big tourist customer and a

very wealthy W1 customer with a huge disposable income. She might spend £20-£30,000 in one go. In Leeds, it's a different story. They don't want a Moschino jacket that is brand identifiable. They move in a smaller social circle. The last thing they want is someone to say, 'God, she's got that jacket on again.' What about the Ladies who Lunch? "We realised there was a gap in our market there. So next season we're selling Versace couture - exclusive to us and the shop on Bond Street - which costs £11-12,000 per piece."

Fashion purists are rare: Mrs Gill Smythman has been selling Jean Muir on the outskirts of Birmingham to a hard-core following for 30 years. "Sometimes I might throw a dress on the sofa and watch it form its own shape. Often, I'm lying in bed and I just like looking at them hanging on the outside of my wardrobe. It doesn't matter how old they are, or if the first bloom's gone off. They're works of art. Much more than just clothes."

TEL: 0171 293 2222

classified • personal

FAX: 0171 293 2505

Independent Hearts

Replies should be addressed to the relevant box number, c/o The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL

Club SIRIUS Free Profiles
Club Magazine
Information Pack
SIRIUS, for the intelligent, articulate and well educated, providing personal interviews and, of course, complete discretion at all times. Even before you subscribe, we send you 24 in-depth profiles of members living in your area, individually matched just for you.

0800 072 0075
8.30am to 10.30pm 7 days a week
or write to FREEPOST 302 London EC15 1SY

GAY MEN
Form long term relationships through
Significant Others
the Introduction Bureau for Professional Gay Men
0171 494 0009

Successful, attractive, well educated, sociable...
I can't believe they're single!
Be a friend to a friend
drawing down the moon
THE ORIGINAL PERSONAL INTRODUCTION AGENCY
0171 937 6263
Est. 1984 • Members 1000

Members Hotel
Talk Live & Unreserved
And change the way you meet other men!
DIAL NOW
London Number now on-line
0171-649 9934
Call to The Members Hotel, charged at standard rates. You must be over 18 years old.

Even though you have an interesting job and a busy social life, a truly compatible partner can still be hard to find. We can help. One benefit to our service is that we can help you find a partner who is not only compatible but also attractive. **01869 324 100**

Sara Eden
PERSONAL INTRODUCTIONS
A charming service with countless long-term relationships. MAIL ON SUNDAY
Windsor 01753 830350 London 0171 499 9626
Fax 01753 830350 London 0171 499 9626

ACROSS THE ROOM
Sparkling party nights
Romantic candlelit dinners one to one
introductions
Essex, Herts and Suffolk
Call Eleanor for FREE brochure
Free call 0800 591 274

ATTACHED? SEEKING ROMANCE?
Phone David now on 0181 962 6300 for our new full colour information pack. Loving Linda is the UK's first and only FREE matchmaking service. We have a FREE consultation and HELPLINE for our subscribers. Thousands of "Sweet & Simple" letters to help you find the right man. **0181 962 6300**

CHAT CHAT CHAT
Find Russian Romance through professionally organized tours to St Petersburg. Includes 8-day programme featuring welcome dinner, cocktail party, sightseeing and an opportunity to meet carefully selected prospective lady partners with a genuine desire for marriage. For more details of Oct 25 and Nov 20 departures please apply to Partners Through Travel, Box No 12342, Fax: 0171 589077. E-mail: russia@partners.thru-travel.co.uk

CHESHIRE FOX AGILE, free, just over 40. Looking for a date. Reply in no more than nine and a half words. Box No 12410

THE INDEPENDENT
Single Free
COMING SOON: An exciting NEW telephone dating service for our readers, designed to make your search for someone special easier and more successful than ever. Now it will be FREE to place your ad, FREE* to record your own voice greeting and FREE* to pick up your messages! 24 hours a day! It's the phone call that could change your life!

Plus, you'll soon be seeing a whole new look in the paper. Our new section has been designed to get a better response for you... quality responses, too. That means you'll get more messages from the kind of people you're trying to meet.

Place your FREE ad today! Call:
0800 216 318

Chat Lines
Talk To Me Now!
0171 900 5611
Phone Action
0171 900 5611
45 WOMEN ON LINE
0891 7080 57

Wanna Chat?
24 hrs
1000's of Guys & Girls on-line daily!
00-532-588-516

THE SCUBA
0171 900 5611

OR place your ad by Post
Complete the coupon and post to the address below. We will send you your Voicebox number and PIN so that you can check your replies by phone. Send to: The Independent Voice Personal, Classified Dept, 15th Floor, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

Message for publication (30 words max)

Name _____
Address _____
Postcode _____
Date of Birth _____

Tel No. _____

Participating readers must be aged 18 or over

NOTICE TO READERS
The Independent cannot guarantee that respondents will receive a reply when answering advertisements on this page, although we hope that as a matter of courtesy they will. When making contact with people for the first time it is advisable to meet in a public place and let a member of your family or trusted friend know where you will be. We would advise readers and advertisers to exercise caution when giving out personal details. This will be respected by genuine respondents.

The Brain Research Trust
(Registered Charity No 263064)

- Epilepsy
- Senile dementia
- Multiple sclerosis
- Muscular dystrophy
- Parkinson's disease
- Motor neurone disease
- Brain tumours
- Down's syndrome
- Huntingdon's chorea

Help us to conquer diseases of the brain and nervous system through research at the Institute of Neurology.

Please help with donations, Deeds of Covenant, G.A.Y.E. and Gift Aid.

1, Wakefield Street, London WC1N 1PJ.
Telephone: 0171 278 5051



If you prefer your drink shaken instead of stirred, then you'll need a cocktail shaker like this bullet-shaped one at £34.95 as well as a mixing glass (£5.95); both from Jerry's Home Store



If you prefer your margarita frozen then invest in an ice crusher such as this stainless steel machine at £65 from The Catalogue at Presents Direct, mail order 0171 371 7017

This glass and aluminium coffee table (£715) from Purves & Purves is perfect to place your drinks on

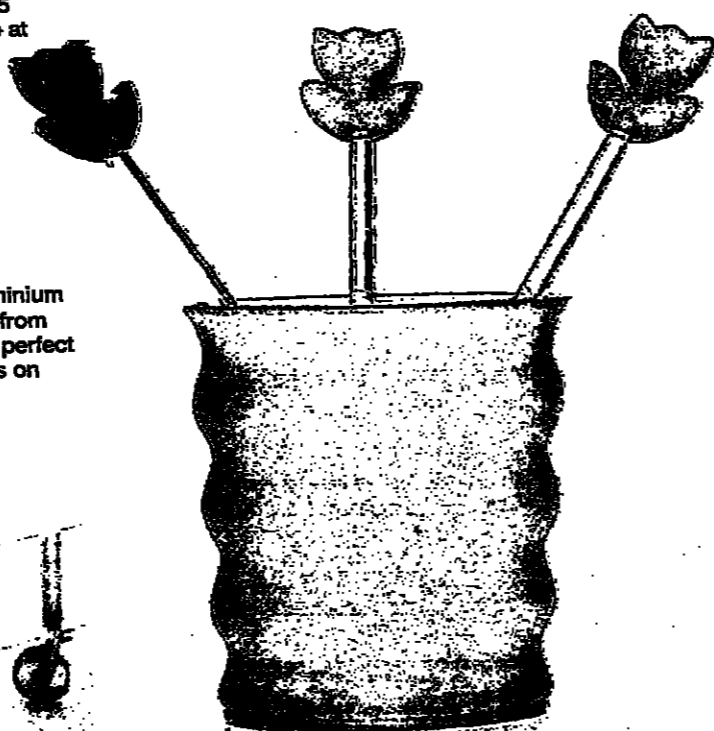
The Time: Evening The Place: Cocktail party

The Essentials: Be prepared for the trendiest type of cocktail party yet. They're big in New York and they're heading over here - everything from your swizzle stick to your lounge chair should be sharp, smart and very retro



Sip your dry Martini on one of these trendy geometric interlocking seats priced £329 each from Purves & Purves

These tulip shaped swizzle sticks (99p each) will add a shot of colour to any cocktail glass Matching glasses are priced £2.95. From The Pier



Dry Martini
Nine parts of gin, one tenth of dry Vermouth. Stir and serve.

Bloody Mary
Put six dashes of Worcestershire sauce, three dashes of Tabasco, and a pinch of salt and pepper in a shaker, add the juice of half a lemon, two ounces of vodka and finally tomato juice. Shake and serve.

Under the counter with Lindsay Calder

Next month I will be twenty-nine. So you know what that means, this time next year... I've spent the last couple of years not really remembering whether I was 26 or 27 or 28 - no worries. But I can see now that this was a kind of sub-conscious avoidance of *anno Domini*, refusing to acknowledge the GMT of my biological time-clock.

A recent catalogue of events has made me realise, with horror, that lots of people are younger than me. For instance last week I learned that my ex-boss's eighteen year old son was going out with a twenty-eight year old woman who is a model for the artist Lucien Freud. I remember when this sweet fair-haired boy had his first day at Eton, how he used to come into the office during the holidays, all shy and awkward. Now he is 6ft-4, and with this woman, who according to an ex-colleague, Freud paints "beaver and all".

Then there are all these girls who have barely even finished their GCSEs, writing best-sellers in their bedrooms. And of course, the Spice Girls. The "affectionately-named" Baby Spice is twenty-one, 5ft-2, and enjoys such celebrity that - you know what - the competition on the front page of my local paper this week is "a once in a lifetime chance to win Baby Spice's plaster cast". Can you believe that? (She injured her wrist in Turkey last month, apparently). It's just gross.

Next year I will even be too old to go on a Club 18-30 holiday. Not that I particularly want to go, you understand, but I can't bear the idea of being too old for anything. There is, of course, a solution. A friend of mine, who shall remain nameless, has been lying about her age for the last few years. I recently met her in a bar, where she had to

prime me at the door: "look everyone here thinks I'm twenty-eight. OK? Please don't say anything".

We later spent hours agonising over our imminent decrepitude, discussing everything from wrinkle cream to contraception, along the lines of "mine are much worse than yours" and "are you sure that's safe?" After going through *Phytocream*, *Primordiale*, *Perisoma*, the Pill, and a few gallons of Chardonnay, she had a brainwave: "I know, let's get our belly-buttons pierced". This was a desperate attempt to recapture the flat-stomached, come-and-get-it, don't-give-a-shit golden youth we once knew. But unless I go to Marbella for my holidays and hang out with a bunch of eighteen year olds, who the hell is going to see this thing? Then if the idea of it is to ensnare a muscular young toyboy, what happens - as he too would presumably have a belly-button ring - in *flagrant delicto* if your rings get caught? The thought is too awful. "No" I said. "It would rub against the waistband of my Nicole Farhi suit, you'll have to think of something else".

She, however, is going for it - I hope it helps. Meanwhile I'm kicking myself over the hill with intensive sessions in the gym, lashings of *Primordiale*, cans of caffeine-loaded drinks and definitely not reading "Cosmopolitan's Thirty Things You Should Have Done by Thirty".

Primordiale Serum by Lancôme, £37 from Fenwick, 63 New Bond Street, London W1. *Anti-aging Phytocream*, 60ml, £9.85 from Verde, 15 Flask Walk, Humpstead, London NW3.

Navel piercing, £25-75, depending on choice of ring, (about ten other parts of the body can also be pierced...) *Metal Morphosis Body Piercing Studio*, 10/11 Moor Street, Soho, London W1.

THE INDEPENDENT INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

Lunch at MEZZO for £10

And receive a complimentary glass of Laurent-Perrier Champagne

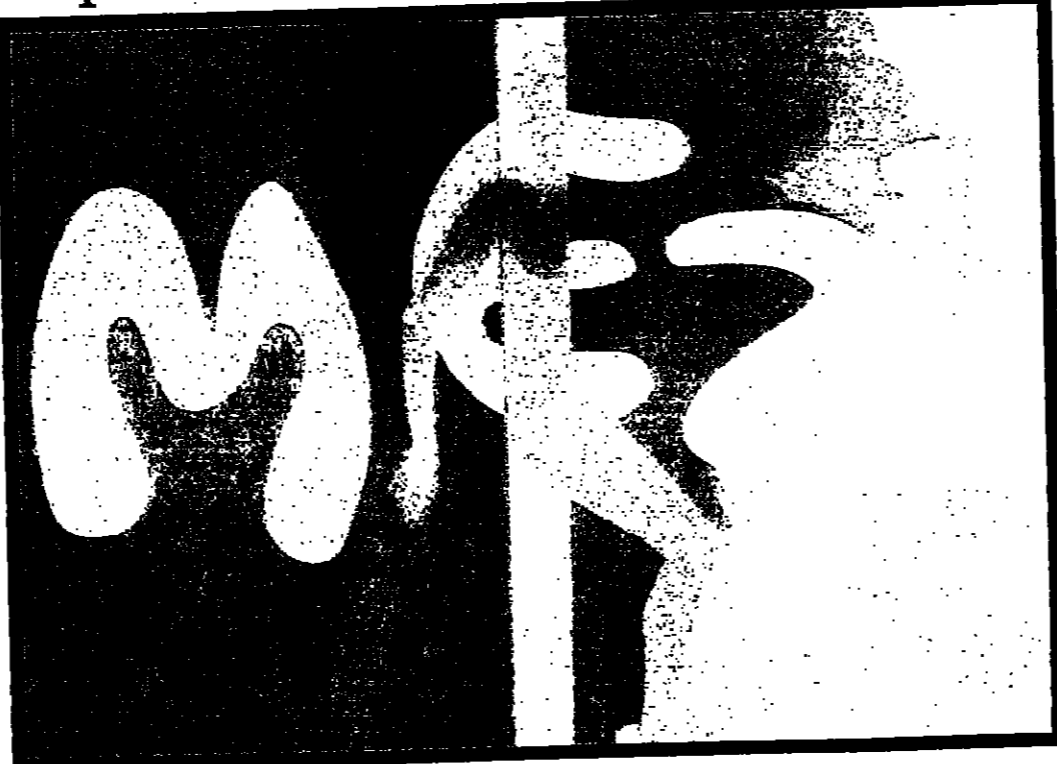
The Independent and the Independent on Sunday are giving you the opportunity to enjoy a two course lunch at Mezzo for just £10 or a two course dinner for £17.50. Every Independent diner will also receive a complimentary glass of Laurent-Perrier Champagne.

The Independent diner making the reservation, and all their guests will be able to choose a starter and main course, or a main course and dessert from the specially prepared Independent menu - samples of which were printed yesterday (the menu will be subject to change throughout the course of the offer). Alternatively, you can have a three course lunch for £13.50 or a three course dinner for £21.50. The promotion is valid until September 20 only in the Mezzo Downstairs restaurant.

How to Book

Phone Mezzo Downstairs in advance on 0171 314 4000 to make your reservation. Identify yourself as an Independent diner, and quote the password - 'Mezzindy'. The lunch offer is available every day, except Saturdays, while you can take advantage of the dinner offer between Sundays and Wednesdays. Pre-booking is essential and all bookings are subject to availability.

Laurent-Perrier Brut is the perfect aperitif Champagne showing excellent balance, freshness and delicacy. Known for its quality and reliability, Laurent-Perrier's finesse makes it the perfect introduction to any meal.



● Mezzo opened in September 1995 at 100 Wardour street, London W1, and is reputedly the largest restaurant in Europe. The menu is based on traditional foods with the emphasis on high quality, fresh ingredients used to create simple, classic dishes: grills, roisseries, and of course, crustacea.

"I hope that Mezzo gives people such a thrill and excitement that their jaws drop when they see it for the first time; the enormous, open void between Mezzonine upstairs and Mezzo restaurant downstairs; the dramatic, curvaceous staircase; the theatre of the opened-up kitchens; specially commissioned artwork. Wow!"

- TERENCE CONRAN



Win a Mezzo Dinner Party

In addition to the Mezzo lunch and dinner offer, The Independent and Independent on Sunday are running an exclusive competition whereby John Torode will prepare and cook for a private dinner party (for up to 8 people) in the home of one Independent reader.

John Torode, well known for his TV work, is "The Chef" at Mezzo and is responsible for all food in a restaurant which on any given day can serve up to 2000 people. John will plan the menu with the winner and prepare a 3 course dinner with a selection of wines to complement the meal. Mezzo will also provide their Sommelier, Kate Thal, to serve your guests.

A budget of £250 will be made available for purchase of food and wine. The dinner party can be arranged for any time between October 1st 1997 and January 31st 1998.

How To Enter

All you have to do is prepare your answer the following questions:

1. What does the Italian word 'Mezzo' mean in English?
2. Which famous music club formerly stood on the site of Mezzo at 100 Wardour Street?

Then telephone the following number: 0930 563 700

Leave your answers to the two questions, together with your name, address and daytime telephone number. Calls cost 50p per minute at all times. Your calls should last no longer than three minutes. Lines will close at midnight on Tuesday 12th August 1997.

Rules and Conditions: 1. The competition is open to all UK residents aged 18 or over, except employees of Newspaper Publishing plc and Mezzo, their families, their agents or anyone else connected with the competition. 2. The competition closes at midnight on Tuesday 12th August 1997. Closing time for all entries is midnight on Tuesday 12th August. 3. The winner will be selected by random draw from all entries received by the competition closing time. 4. The prize of £250 will be made available for purchase of food and wine for the dinner party. 5. The date of the dinner party must be arranged at a mutually agreed time for John Torode, who will be chosen at random from those entries who correctly answer the two questions. 6. The winning entry will be deemed to be accepted to these conditions.

Promoter: Newspaper Publishing plc, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5AR

The RAC's new image is hypocritical: a shallow PR-inspired attempt by a motoring organisation to jump on the green bandwagon. The new crownless logo is a meaningless squiggle, a graphic mess, in contrast to the elegance of the old logo. If I were the Queen, I would give up my membership of the RAC in protest, and join the AA instead. And the new bright-orange RAC breakdown trucks look like Dyno-Rod vans, and are completely inappropriate vehicles for the self-styled "Knights of the Road".

That's what I think, anyway, and that's what I've written in the past.

Neil Johnson, the RAC's chief executive, ex-Sandhurst, ex-Royal Green Jackets and ex-Jaguar director, disagrees. This is not surprising. Many of the new features are his ideas. But instead of merely dropping me a snotty letter and wiping my name off the list for new RAC road atlases (for review, of course), he said: "Let's talk".

So we are. I'm in his big office, overlooking Cockspur Street, right next to Trafalgar Square. He says thanks for coming, and I say "Isn't the new image just an upshot of research you've commissioned that says the RAC is a dusty old organisation, about as in touch with everyday issues as Bertie Wooster, and some clever ad people have now come up with a new identity to boost business?" Or words to that effect.

He says, "Yes, partly", and that rather disarms me. "All organisations have to take stock of where they're at, and prepare for change. On our centenary, it seemed a good time to do that. Our corporate identity hadn't changed since 1972, so we thought it was time. But this isn't just a PR campaign. There is real substance behind our claims. If there wasn't, it would all be bullshit."

Mr Johnson says that the next 20 years will see as many changes for motorists as the first two decades after the car was invented. "Not so many years ago, people joined the RAC because there was a reasonable expectation that, on a long trip, your journey would be interrupted by a breakdown. That just isn't true any more. But, increasingly, there is a reasonable expectation of long delays owing to congestion. One of our main thrusts, in the new-look RAC, is to be able to help our members avoid delay, and keep them on the move."

The RAC's solution sounds like some sort of science fiction. Increasingly, though, the measures are science fact. "We'll not only tell members what the traffic is like before setting out - we do that already.

Nerds of the road

Gavin Green is impressed by the new-look RAC's hi-tech plans

We'll give them individual updates on traffic conditions as they move along. In a nutshell, Mr Johnson anticipates doing a deal with a mobile phone network so that, as a car moves from one phone cell to another, the RAC tracks its progress. "It's quite easy to anticipate the car's route. If bad traffic lies ahead, we'll ring you on your mobile phone, warn you about the traffic ahead, and suggest an alternative route." Mr Johnson reckons, "By the end of the decade, we'll be deeply there."

Equally, breakdown services will be revolutionised. The Knights of the Road will be replaced by nerds of the road. Come the new millennium, the on-board computers already fitted as standard to most modern cars will notify the RAC - via the car's mobile phone, about an imminent problem. "At the moment, the on-board computer diagnostic equipment is used when the car is being serviced but, on the move, it is incapable of transmitting



Driven man: Neil Johnson, RAC's chief executive

PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREW BURMAN

this information. In the future, it will tell us automatically about an imminent problem, we'll ring you in your car, and suggest you meet an RAC van in a certain location."

Mr Johnson says that an organisation dealing with such "hi-tech" issues needed a new logo, and that the crown, "which is perceived as quite old-fashioned," would not have been appropriate.

"Plus, there is a certain tastelessness in commercially exploiting the crown. A lot of companies just don't like doing that sort of thing any more." The crown stays on the logo of the RAC Motor Sports Association, which controls all British motor sport, and on the logo of the Pall Mall men-only RAC Club. The Queen, far from rushing off to join the AA in a huff, "was fully supportive".

On the RAC's much publicised "greening", Mr Johnson confirms that the RAC "is still a motoring organisation". This is contrary to what was said at the Islington press conference a few months back (even the location was new-wave trendy) at which the RAC was transmogrified into a "mobility" organisation, whatever that means. Before I could cause Mr Johnson too much embarrassment here, he was quick to point out that "the main area of mobility we deal with, is, of course, motoring. But it should be obvious that traffic congestion is now at the stage that something has to be done. We're trying to balance the reality of what is happening with a desire to be able to continue to use the private car in a reasonable and enjoyable way, and for it to fit into an overall transport package."

He is encouraged by the new government. "They're talking about a rational, integrated transport policy. Of course, it is going to cost money. It's no good telling people they've got to get out of their cars into public transport. What you've got to do is make public transport more attractive. It must be so user-friendly, so clean, so safe, so efficient and so predictable, that it's no contest. Would you rather sit in a traffic jam, or in clean, well-ventilated public transport?"

He denies that such talk is just a big PR stunt, and that the recent multi-million pound ad campaign - which depicted the RAC as the potential saviours from an environmental Armageddon - is more than just puff to encourage a few more car-users to join them, rather than the AA. "The ads encouraged people to think in a new way, I hope. Add that to the considerable behind-the-scenes lobbying we do, to encourage the government to offer a proper transport policy, and it is a very tangible plan of action."

The new-look RAC will no longer always be in the "build more roads" camp. "The illogical Mr Toad-like 'lay more concrete for my car' route just isn't realistic," says Mr Johnson. "But some bypasses still make sense, and we will campaign for them. Equally, the state of British roads is disgraceful. The golden rule - it's better to replace a few slates when the roof leaks, rather than wait so long that you need a new roof - was ignored by the last government. Repairs are desperately needed now."

I leave our 90-minute interview agreeing with almost everything that Neil Johnson says. So much for confrontation. But I still hate the logo, and the vans.



Pay up, pay up, play the game

MERCEDES-BENZ CLK320

Specifications
Price: £36,640. Engine: 3,199cc V6, 16 valve, 218bhp at 5,800rpm. Five-speed automatic gearbox, rear-wheel drive. Performance: top speed 150mph, 0-60 in 7.0 sec. Fuel consumption: 23-28mpg.

Rivals
BMW 320i Coupé Sport, £28,215. Old stager does everything the Mercedes can, feels more solid and is more fun to drive.

Peugeot 406 V6 Coupé, £26,420. Permed by Pininfarina, and possibly the most beautiful coupe you can buy. Well-built and a great drive, too.

Rover 325 Coupé, £26,140. Bigger than the Benz, but close to pensionable age. Looks it and feels it too, despite fine new V16 engine.

Volvo C70, £35,500. Approx. Smart new turbocharged coupe has been delayed while Volvo gets the quality right, but should be worth the wait.

What could be more desirable than a Mercedes-Benz coupé? Many things, actually: a chateau in the Dordogne, a private income, Raymond Blanc as your next-door neighbour with a communicating door to his kitchen... But, back in the real world, a Mercedes coupé is a fine expression of the more tastefully extravagant things in life.

Few cars have been better advocates of the less-is-more school of automotive temptation. Central to the existence of nearly every coupe is the notion that you pay more than you would for the workaday saloon on which a coupé is usually based, and in return you get less space and less utility but more panache, and visual frissons of desire.

Mercedes-Benzes that have been cut with the stylist's knife, however, lift the notion of spending needless extra money into an almost noble art form, because the sums are so large and the decoupage so subtle.

On this basis the new CLK - lean, lithe, the sportiest-looking full four-seater that Mercedes has ever produced - cannot fail to be a huge hit down Knightsbridge way. In relatively humble CLK 230K form, with a supercharged four-cylinder engine, it costs £4,300 more than a similarly powered C-class saloon, while in grandest CLK 320 specification, with sporty Sport or plush Elegance trim and a fat V6 engine, it's not yours until you've saved up £36,640. And even then you have to pay extra for a sunroof, electric seats and leather trim.

You are, though, driving a Benz. And on this fact is based the UK importer's whole pricing strategy. If the marketers can get away with it, then who can blame them? There might well be a Peugeot 406 V6 Coupé, broadly similar in on-paper attributes and costing £10,000 less, but it doesn't have The

ROAD TEST Mercedes-Benz CLK

By John Simister

Badge. More fool us? It's intriguing to see that in Germany, the Peugeot is pricier than the Mercedes.

For many people, the foregoing will tell them all they need to know about the CLK. It's a sleek Mercedes coupé, therefore it's desirable and you want one, end of story.

But I'm going to tell you some more, anyway. Unlike its predecessor, the old-shape E-class coupé, the CLK is (loosely) based on the C-class. Not that you'd guess from the way it looks, because its nose has the four-headlamp face of a current E-class and the tail design is also a smaller, sharper version of that big saloon's. More than ever before, Mercedes' most accessible coupé is its own car rather than a morph of something more mundane.

That it's good to drive goes almost without saying, although the experience is infused with the competent aloofness that is the hallmark of most Benzes. The CLK 320's V6 motor, part of a new family of engines which are shorter than the straight-sixes they replace so that there's more crumple-room in a crash, sounds and feels much like its ancestors, partly because it has a balancer shaft to smooth out the slight tactile and aural granularity sensed in nearly every other V6.

Apparently unfashionably, it also has just one

exhaust valve per cylinder to go with the pair of inlet valves, but it's a very large one. The idea is to keep more heat in the exhaust gases so that the catalyst can work more efficiently. If you're designing an engine today, you start at the exhaust pipe and work forwards. It's a back-to-front world.

This is a quick car, and easy to drive quickly thanks to a slick-shifting five-speed automatic transmission, ample grip and a creamy, fluid demeanour through corners marred only by a rubbery feel to the steering. There's 218bhp on tap, but sophisticated traction control (it works with the anti-lock brakes to slow wheels individually and help inhibit a skid) keeps the power channelled in the right direction. And

should you need to stop ultra-suddenly, the braking system senses the urgency of the pedal's movement and applies extra pressure for a quicker halt.

This is all very good and worthy, but in the end the CLK isn't so special as to justify that huge price. Examine the cabin to see why. It's decently made, and designed with the usual Benz logic, but the materials show signs of cost-cutting out of place in a car of this identity. Given the flimsiness of some mouldings, Mercedes is in danger of risking its rock-solid reputation. Of course the CLK is a good car, but so is the stunningly gorgeous-looking and equally capable Peugeot 406 Coupé. I'd rather save £10,000.

Deceptive Benz: the lean, lithe and supercharged CLK covers ground with consummate ease and rapidly - but with the equally capable Peugeot 406 Coupé at £10,000 less, what price the three-pointed star?

motoring

Landrover

LAND ROVER

Choice

best choice available prices used Discoverys

FREEPHONE 0800 424 414

Mazda

MAZDA

Choice

best choice available prices used MX range etc.

FREEPHONE 0800 323 626

SAAB

SAAB Largest Selection in East Anglia, Buckingham, Stanley, Cambridge, 0223840022

01223

Registration Numbers

MARKET RESEARCH

23 DAILY HILL DRIVE, CHORLEY, BOROUGH

ADA 87	1.650	REC 671	1.000	1.57772	2.200	884 RH	3.000
AH 828	3.200	FL 32	1.700	12 MA	6.000	882 RCO	2.800
BA DCD	5.000	GR 56	2.500	MEB SA	800	RR 2788	2.800
IBAD COMPANY	800	GJH	FOA	MR 210	FOA	SJX1	4.200
28 BEA	2.200	GOW 257	1.000	PAVABLE (C)		(MR.S.J.CROSS)	
BL 782	700	HAF 357	750	MB 86	1.700	8866 SM	5.000
BOB 19	5.000	HAF 55	1.600	MS 59	7.000	ST 8251	FOA
BOS 84	1.600	HD 9488	1.400	MUN 802	1.200	8 TES	2.800
60 BYE	1.000	HO 3051	1.000	MW 9428	2.000	232 TMA	1.000
(60 BKE)		HR 39	3.000	NC1	22.500	800 UCK	700
CW 680	1.600	877 21	2.800	NSCUT	4.000	LF 4	3.800
50 CLM	2.800	LI 8706	2.400	OTF 77	500	8 LVE	1.650
285 CPC	1.600	JRS 400	3.000	D777 PHT	600	GI USA	2.500
TRD DA	1.400	882 JW	3.400	PCS 68	3.200	VER 558	1.250
479 DEJ	1.550	864 KAS	1.800	3383 PP	1.500	(VERNONVERA)	
DS 6966	1.200	KDL 383	1.000	RAP 40X	800	WUN 91	1.450
US 8846	1.400	LAZ 7	2.800	RBR 838	1.000	(IPORSHS)	
5347 DW	2.000	LAZ 77	1.800	NB 750	1.000	282 WW	1.200
864 EDR	800	LAZ 777	1.000	2 RCK	2.500	130X	8.000
ESS 74	1.600	LJK 268	1.000	(PICK)		NEW JAG 300	
FAZ 22	1.800	LRP 227	1.800	RDH 761	2.200		

PHONE 01257 482205 FAX 01257 451255 FAX

MOST ARE PLUS V.A.T. ALL ARE PLUS TRANSFER

To advertise in this section
please call the Motoring Team
on 0171 293 2742.

£10.
Mezzo
er Party

To Enter
done the follow
0930 563 700

homes & money

Sounds like the neighbours

Domestic noise can ruin your life. But people are reluctant to complain. By Penny Jackson

If there is anything worse than living with intrusive noise it is the thought that nobody else would even try to. The fear of putting a blight on a house when it comes to selling holds a great many people back from complaining too vociferously about the source of a disturbance.

An acquaintance who lives in the country, is woken up every morning at six by the dogs next door. "They are let out at first light and are then locked in the house all day. They bark almost the whole time. They are clearly unhappy and I feel guilty about not reporting it to the RSPCA, but if we get into a disagreement with our neighbours I am worried we will not be able to sell the house," she explains.

All vendors are obliged to inform a purchaser about a dispute with a neighbour and it is a routine question during the standard preliminary inquiry. Any undocumented niggles, though, can be kept under wraps, which is why some beleaguered owners prefer to suffer in silence and why buyers are well advised to visit a property at a number of different times of the day.

Valerie Gibson, founder of the Noise Network, sympathises with this tendency to keep quiet, but regrets the reluctance householders have about tackling an issue directly. "I know exactly what it is like. At one time we had a woman next to us who played her music very loudly. Buyers would come round but never return. It took a year before we eventually sold and even then we had to reduce the price."

Those who are prepared to enter the legal fray in search of peace and quiet find themselves set on an arduous course. Les Fenner fought a long battle with a south London borough which placed air-conditioning units for a swimming pool at the bottom of his garden. "I was woken up five or six times a night by the machines. After four years of broken sleep, my health deteriorated and we moved last year to the West Country," says Mr Fenner from his new home overlooking the sea.

"When we put our London house on the market, we told our buyers' surveyor about the long argument we had about the machines but that it was now settled. Fortunately, it didn't worry them," he adds.

Even though there are no figures to show that illness can be triggered by domestic noise, it can

drive people to the depths of despair. Recently, local authorities have become much tougher on anti-social behaviour. From last month, under the 1996 Noise Act, they have far greater powers to curb noise during the night. Offenders face on-the-spot fines of £100, the confiscation of hi-fi equipment and, if they prefer to go to court, they risk a £1,000 fine and a criminal conviction. But so far, according to Valerie Gibson, only 8 per cent of local authorities have chosen to adopt the full provisions of the Act with a round-the-clock service, although many do provide an out-of-hours hotline and weekend patrols. But as complaints about noise everywhere increase, officers are being met by more aggression. There have been reports of those investigating complaints being abused, spat at and beaten up.

Fear of violence or some kind of reprisal deters many people from approaching their neighbours, Ms Gibson believes. "Most of the people who contact us have made an effort to complain, but some are very scared." While accepting that mediation has a useful role, she is critical of some councils' rush to use it, often forcing complainants into making unsatisfactory compromises.

In the present market conditions, sellers with a relatively small neighbour problem may well be worrying unduly. Agents say that if buyers like a property and the issue appears only minor, they are more prepared to overlook it than they might be during times of plenty. They may even put a row down to an unfortunate clash of personalities.

This may be optimistic when it comes to the unreformable character, but some rows generate an interest all of their own. Take the annual set-to at Garsington Manor, for instance. The 11-week opera season in this Oxfordshire village provokes feelings to rival anything on stage. At the centre of the anti-lobby is Monica Waud, whose Georgian home is just an aerie away from the manor. Given that the opera is now being prosecuted for breaching noise levels, does she feel this would reduce the value of her house were she to sell? "Far from it," she says. "Opera has such amazing snob appeal, there are no doubt people who would relish the idea of living so close. It's a bizarre situation."



Three to view

Cream of Devon

Warren Cottage, near Newton Ferrers, was built by the first Lord Revelstoke in 1882 as a stopping-off point for lunch on a nine-mile drive from his house, Membrand Hall, around the Yealm Estuary and along the cliffs.

Perched above Warren Beach, the cottage was perfect for guests such as Edward VII and the Empress Frederick to change into their bathing togs before a spot of lunch. The four-bedroom house with music room, study and an acre of gardens is surrounded by National Trust land. It is being sold by Strutt & Parker who invite final offers by 19 September, at a guide price of £300,000 (01392 215631).



Knowle Down was derelict from the late 1940s until 1990 when the present owners discovered and restored it. The Grade II-listed house near South Molton (six miles from Exmoor) has four bedrooms and three reception rooms and has an additional two-bedroom annexe presently let as a holiday cottage. The sitting room has a chestnut timber floor, exposed beams and a Hunter combustion stove set into the fireplace. There is a conservatory, barn, garden room and workshop. All for sale through Webbers (01398 323271) for £255,000.



Mill Cottage at Bolberry, a mile inland from Hope Cove in south Devon, is a traditional old house with deep window seats, oak beams and oak boarded doors. The three-bedroom thatched house has been completely renovated and sits in an acre of landscaped gardens, stocked with wisteria, roses, apple, cherry and viburnum. A stream feeds into a pond of water lilies. Agents Marchand Petit are asking £295,000 (01548 844473).



Rosalind Russell

TEL: 0171 293 2222

property • residential

FAX: 0171 293 2505

Services	Services	To Let	Wanted	Wales
<p>Stacks RELOCATION</p> <p>PROPERTY FINDING SERVICE FOR INDIVIDUALS AND COMPANIES</p> <p>LOOKING FOR A HOUSE OR FLAT IN LONDON OR THE HOME COUNTIES? WE WILL FIND IT AND ACT ON YOUR BEHALF TO COMPLETION</p> <p>We have six of our thirteen offices covering the commuter belt</p> <p>For a brochure or a discussion - contact: Head Office: Tel: 01666 860523 Fax: 01666 860886 London Office: Tel: 0171 622 0542 Fax: 0171 738 9332 e-mail: 106456.2461@compuserve.com</p>	<p>Stacks RELOCATION</p> <p>PROPERTY FINDING SERVICE FOR INDIVIDUALS AND COMPANIES</p> <p>LOOKING FOR A HOUSE OR FLAT IN LONDON OR THE HOME COUNTIES? WE WILL FIND IT AND ACT ON YOUR BEHALF TO COMPLETION</p> <p>We have six of our thirteen offices covering the commuter belt</p> <p>For a brochure or a discussion - contact: Head Office: Tel: 01666 860523 Fax: 01666 860886 London Office: Tel: 0171 622 0542 Fax: 0171 738 9332 e-mail: 106456.2461@compuserve.com</p>	<p>SOHO SOHO ESTATES ESTATES APARTMENTS TO LET</p> <p>COVENTRY HOUSE 2 bed apartments in luxury newly refurbished development, with lift service, central west end location, ranging from £500pw, 5/6 Coventry Street, W1</p> <p>BATEMAN STREET 1 bed luxury flats, with lift service, £500pw, Soho W1</p> <p>CALL SOHO ESTATES LIMITED: 0171 292 8000 FOR VIEWING AND FURTHER INFORMATION</p>	<p>WANTED! LANDSITES - without Planning Permission but with possible development potential. Preferably in village/town locations, in Cheshire and North West.</p> <p>We are prepared to take all the costs and risks in obtaining permission. Our planning consultants are experts. We are interested in buying any land - from large gardens to serious acreage. Difficult, nuisance, problem, conversion, renovation, listed, redundant and unimproved sites all considered.</p> <p>PLEASE FORWARD LOCATION PLANS AND ANY PLANNING HISTORY DETAILS TO:</p> <p>GOLDFINCH STRUTT & PARKER Goldfinch (Projects) Limited, Elston, West Road, Weaverham, Cheshire CW9 3BH Tel: 01928 787800</p>	<p>GOWER PENINSULA</p> <p>Rare opportunity to own traditional 3-bedroom cottage with building plot overlooking links golf course and short walk from superb sandy bay. Ideal for retirement second home or very lucrative holiday letting.</p> <p>£200,000 ono Tel: (Day) 01792 894623 (Evening) 01792 233108</p>
<p>Devon & Cornwall</p> <p>DEVON CALVERLEY TIVERTON Idyllic Det. "Chocolate Box Cottage", set in 1 1/2 acre grounds. Oil ash imported from Devon. 3 bedrooms, spacious lounge, kitchen, bathroom, oven well and stream garage, parking. Easy access to M5 and B3160.</p> <p>PRICE: £118,000 Tel: 01884 252228</p>	<p>Kent</p> <p>NR. CANTERBURY Rare opportunity to acquire a spacious 2 bed Gnd Flr Apt in 18C GDI listed Georgian Mansion, set within a 1000 acre park. High ceilings, oil and marble floors. London 1hr, Paris 2hrs - L/H with F/H.</p> <p>Suit retired/professionals. 01304 825575</p>	<p>Somerset</p> <p>NE SOMERSET Immaculate spacious barn conversion. South facing in courtyard with listed buildings. 3 bedrooms, utility, bathroom, huge open-plan kitchen through dining and living. Ample parking. Must see details. Possible garage. 8 x 15m mature garden inviting final interpretation. No chain.</p> <p>ONO £145,000 Tel: 01373 832156</p>	<p>Ireland</p> <p>WEST OF IRELAND</p> <p>Charming 3 bedroom country cottage with many modern features. Situated on a 1 acre site which can be further developed as a commercial Nursery or as a private garden.</p> <p>Price £75,000 BRADY AUCTIONEERS LTD Tel: 00 353 78 20595 Fax: 00 353 78 20411</p>	<p>Yorksire Dales</p> <p>Spacious one bedroomed split level apartment, overlooking the water side in converted Victorian mill. Original features. Fully fitted kitchen. Secured parking and entrance to the mill. Two minute walk from Skipton town centre.</p> <p>£69,500 Tel: 01942 817801</p>
<p>Docklands</p> <p>London Property</p> <p>HERNE HILL, SE24 Pre-war 3-bed semi, generously proportioned rooms, full garden, huge garage/workshop. Oil ash imported from Devon. 3 bedrooms, spacious lounge, kitchen, bathroom, oven well and stream garage, parking. Easy access to M5 and B3160.</p> <p>PRICE: £118,000 Tel: 01884 252228</p>	<p>London Property</p> <p>HERNE HILL, SE24 Pre-war 3-bed semi, generously proportioned rooms, full garden, huge garage/workshop. Oil ash imported from Devon. 3 bedrooms, spacious lounge, kitchen, bathroom, oven well and stream garage, parking. Easy access to M5 and B3160.</p> <p>PRICE: £118,000 Tel: 01884 252228</p>	<p>THE INDEPENDENT AND THE INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY</p> <p>will be featuring two guides to STUDENT ACCOMMODATION in the Property Sections on SATURDAY 16th AUGUST 1997 in THE LONG WEEKEND and SUNDAY 24th AUGUST 1997 in TRAVEL & MONEY INCORP PROPERTY</p> <p>For further information, or to advertise within this feature please call The Property Team: Kenney Ramsay 0171 293 2302 Albert Blackburn 0171 293 2343 Dawn Phillips 0171 293 2037 or fax on 0171 293 3156</p>	<p>NR LEICESTER</p> <p>Immaculate three bed apartment in former 18th Century Lodge 14 miles from city centre. Fully fitted kitchen with built in oven, refrigerator, dishwasher and electric hob. Two bedrooms. Small landscaped garden, garage.</p> <p>£74,950 O.N.O. Day: 0171 293 2343</p>	

150

Bull market throws up another hazard: information overload

When I moved from working as a fund manager for one of the larger investment houses to the investment management department of a stockbroking firm, I thought I would be spared the piles of paper that used to greet me on my desk when I returned from our breakfast meeting each morning. If my hope was for less to read in a broking environment, I was wrong. Just as many trees were cut down satisfy broker/managers as had been the case in the rarefied atmosphere of a merchant bank.

For a brief period, particularly during that time of unnatural quiet that separated the 1987 crash from the Gulf War, the flow of paper lessened. It was too good to last. Gradually the paper flow has picked up. We must be in the bull market to end all bull markets. Speed-reading skills are needed as never before. There can be such a thing as too much information. We have it now.

Let me give you a taste of this week's offerings. Both Nationwide and Halifax are urging me to look at the performance of the housing market. One says growth is slowing, with the year-on-year rise down on June's figure.

The other suggests house prices are as buoyant as ever. It is easy to see why the two are not making the same noise.

Halifax has a very broadly based business, stretching throughout the UK. Its contention that house prices rose by a mere 0.1 per cent during July reflects the very uneven nature of the house price recovery. London has been the leader in restoring values to the home owner. Gradually, we are learning from Nationwide, the good performance in the capital is spreading out to the home counties – but this is of much less importance to Halifax customers, who are buying houses the length and breadth of the land.

Still, Nationwide's contention that house prices rose by more than 10 per cent during the past year (Halifax could not even manage 7 per cent) shows just how strong the South-east has been. London actually delivered a 17.5 per cent increase, according to its survey, even though the rise now seems to be slowing.

Interestingly, the recovery in the housing market is delivering less of a feelgood factor than has been the case in the past. Arguably we do not need it.



Brian Tora

More than £30bn has fallen into the laps of mutual society members, including Halifax borrowers, some of which has been recycled into the real economy.

Which brings me neatly on to the next pile of paper I need to read. As chairman of the investment strategy committee at Greig Middleton, there are reams of opinion to digest ahead of our regular monthly meeting – some considered, some speculative. Among the more interesting items for inclusion in this week's deliberations was the continued remarkable performance of the financial sector.

'During that time of quiet that separated the 1987 crash from the Gulf War the flow of paper lessened. It was too good to last'

themselves as candidates for the dole queue are unlikely to fill the shoes put out by employers anxious to take advantage of new opportunities.

According to Create, the originators of the report, those with creative, flexible minds are needed to deal with new customers and offer new services. It is the back-office jobs that will vanish.

Much of the bloodletting is likely to take place in the banking world. Banks have certainly been in the vanguard of the market rise. The emotionally charged 5,000 barrier was breached decisively this week. It joins many other targets in falling to the bulls as the global rush into equities continues. Is Nemesis waiting around the corner? It is a foolish forecaster indeed who states that no correction will take place, but there is no sign that a reversal of fortune is approaching.

In the US bears still outnumber bulls among professional managers. This suggests that there is still institutional liquidity waiting to go into the market. It is undoubtedly true that the supply of equity is contracting as more firms institute share buy-back programmes. Much of the same scenario exists on

this side of the pond. Those managers brave (or foolhardy) enough to announce that cash is king have been taken apart by the market.

Of course, a trend is a trend until it stops. And stop it will at some stage. Meantime investors should remember that all the action is taking place in a small number of large companies. Look further down the list into the FTSE 250 and you will find prices are barely changed on average since the start of the year. Good value can still be found amongst mid cap stocks overlooked in the mad bull rush.

For those who hanker even smaller companies, it is worth considering Electra Investment Trust. A 20 per cent discount on "net asset value" must underestimate a business which has consistently delivered the goods. Not for widows and orphans, but at least a note on this company is unlikely to extend into the reams of paper with which I usually have to contend.

Brian Tora is chairman of Greig Middleton's investment strategy committee and can be contacted on 0171-655 4000.

The credit trap

Consolidating your debts may not be your best bet, writes Rachel Fixsen

Buying on credit is so easy – it's almost as effortless as letting your credit bills get out of hand. Before you know it, monthly repayments can eat up most of your disposable income and you end up with little left to live on.

Short of winning the lottery, what can you do to escape from this trap? "People have got to be motivated to solve the problem before anything can be done about it," says one debt counsellor.

Financial advisers say many of their clients do not realise just how much interest is charged on the money they borrow, whether on credit cards, personal loans or car payment schemes.

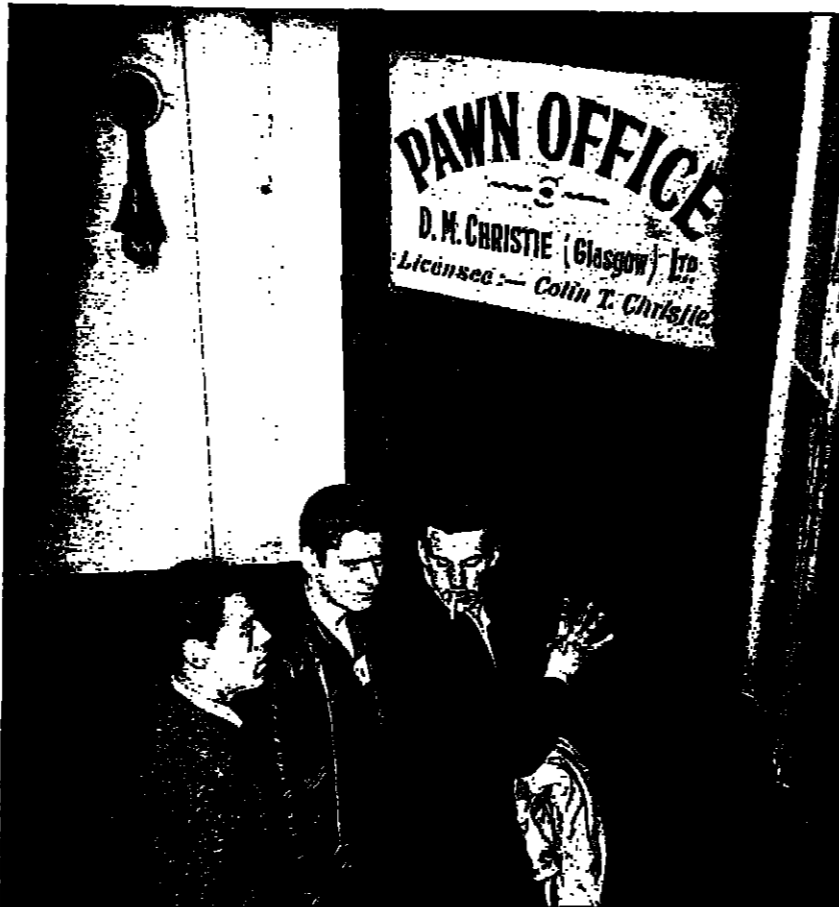
Credit card balances can cost as much as 26 per cent in interest a year, personal loans cost up to 27 per cent and you could pay up to 41 per cent interest on an unauthorised overdraft, according to financial data provider Moneyfacts. The effect of these rates can be crippling.

For example, if you had a £1,000 balance on a furniture store card, a £600 balance on a department store card and owed £1,400 to Barclaycard, then you would probably have to pay a total of £700 a year in interest alone. Add to this repayments on a £70,000 mortgage and a new car, and even someone earning £25,000 could find themselves stretched to meet their minimum payments.

Even if you can't really afford it, it is relatively simple to get access to credit. "The problem is, you can get a Dorothy Perkins store card, and then go next door, and get one from another shop," says Stuart Davidson, of the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux.

Many organisations share information about how much credit a person already has. This is called white data, as opposed to black data, which includes information about any county court judgements you might have against your name.

When you owe here, there and everywhere, consolidating your debts often



Getting into debt does not have to mean a trip to the pawn shop

seems a attractive idea. If you have property which is not fully mortgaged, remortgaging it to include the amount you would need to pay off your other lenders might make sense. The rate of interest you pay on your mortgage is likely to be lower than on other borrowings.

Sometimes you can get a personal loan at a relatively low interest rate. Royal Bank of Scotland Direct offers loans of between £2,000 and £15,000 at rates between 12.3 per cent and 13.9 per cent – considerably less than most credit cards.

But Mr Davidson points out that as unsecured personal loans are often repaid over a longer period than store cards, you can end up paying more over the whole term.

If you find yourself with problems, the first thing you should do is contact your lenders. "The majority will suspend the interest payments to help you get out of difficulty," Mr Davidson says.

But there's no point in consolidating your borrowings unless you attack the root of the problem. Why did you overspend, and can you stop this pattern of behaviour? "Once you consolidate, if you then

take out more credit, then you aren't doing yourself any favours," he says. Younger people who have not settled down are especially apt to overspend. Spending on items which used to be regarded as luxuries is often seen as essential now.

Peter White, managing counsellor at the Consumer Credit Counselling Service, says staff at the service always work out a priority budget with their clients. "You've got to pay your mortgage, council tax – and food tends to be habit-forming," he says. People can get into serious trouble by using available funds to pay to lenders who shout the loudest rather than keeping up mortgage payments.

Setting a watertight budget helps bring it home to clients that any non-essential spending will mean having to forgo an essential payment, and the consequences of this could be dire.

National Debtline, 0121-359 8501; Consumer Credit Counselling Service, 0800 138 1111; Look in the Yellow Pages under "Counselling and advice agencies" for the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Is **Au** right for you?

Are you right for **Au**?

9.9% APR for balance transfers

13.9% APR standard rate

No annual fee

And up to 56 days interest free



Earn at least £20,000

Have a good credit record

Like to keep a balance

Already have a credit card

If you'd like a better kind of credit card, you should apply for Au – a new Gold MasterCard.

Because we're very selective about who gets Au, our cardholders don't subsidise other people's bad debts.

That means you pay just 9.9% APR for the first year on balance

9.9% APR balance transfers for 12 months
13.9% APR standard rate

transfers, and only 13.9% APR standard rate – so you enjoy

excellent value. See below to find out how much you could save.

So if you think Au is right for you, and you're right for Au, call us free on 0800 000 197 or send back the coupon.

Au. Not everyone gets it. Will you?

Call free on **0800 000 197**

Please return to RBS Cards, FREEPOST, RM 1011, Widdow SS11 8BR. Quote Ref: U151

We'll send you full information about Au

Name (Mr/Ms/Miss/Ms)

Block capitals please

Address

Postcode

Telephone (Home/Work)



Note: Unavailable to persons under 21 years of age. Written quotations are available. Subject to status. Cardholder is required to make monthly payments within 25 days of statement date of at least the minimum sum specified on statement which shall not be less than 5% of the outstanding balance or £5, whichever is greater or the full amount due if less than £5. Current rates as at 30 April 1997. *All savings are based on transferring a balance of £2,000, which remains constant for a year. Balance transfer rate 9.9% APR fixed for 12 months, standard rate 13.9% APR variable. The above APRs include the annual fee where applicable. The Au card balance transfer rate is shown. The rates for all other cards are these standard rates and exclude any short term special offers. APRs are based on a credit limit of £5,500.

RBS Cards reserve the right to offer you a similar card, Au2, with a standard APR of 16.9% variable and a balance transfer rate of 13.9% APR fixed for the first 12 months and no annual fee, if you do not qualify for the lower rate card.

RBS Cards Limited. Registered Office: 42 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh EH2 2YE. Registered in Scotland Number 160 111. A Royal Bank of Scotland Company.

PENSIONS MADE SIMPLE

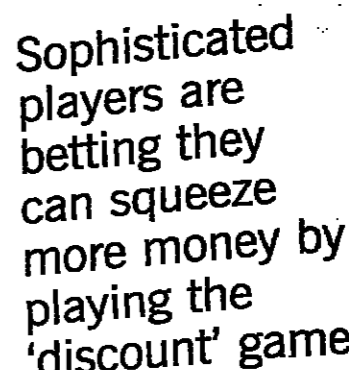
24 hours a day..... 7 days a week..... Now you can pick up the phone and get pensions information or advice and even set up a plan, quickly and without fuss.

0345 6789 10

or talk to your Independent Financial Adviser

SCOTTISH WIDOWS

• YOU r



where discounts to NAV are high and it may be worthwhile committing oneself.

So far so good. But the speculative potential does not end here. One of the features of last week's restructuring of the Fleming Far Eastern Trust, discussed in this column, was the degree to which it was prompted by an external "raider". Elliott Associates, a US speculative fund which had the potential to cause trouble by pushing for the assets in the investment trust to be sold off. It may be worth looking at the activities of Andrew Scheetel, whose US firm, Sierra Trading, is active in the market.

the market.
How does he pick investment trusts likely to face similar attentions in future? Merrill Lynch, an analyst at Charles Lynch, suggests the first thing to look for is evidence of corporate activity generally. For example, many trusts hold regular votes, on average between three and five years, by shareholders on whether to wind themselves up. If the discount to NAV is at least 12-15 per cent, investors would receive a decent return even after wind-up costs.

However, Mr Cade warns: "Govett's US Smaller Situations investment trust shareholders, who had such a vote last year, voted to continue."

Carolyn Coke, another analyst at NatWest Securities, agrees that despite a very wide discount to NAV, which at one point reached 18 per cent, Govett's shareholders remained remarkably loyal.

One fund where a wind-up vote will shortly be taking place is the Edinburgh Dragon Trust, again specialising in the Far East. This trust, whose shareholders vote in November, is trading at a NAV discount of 13 per cent.

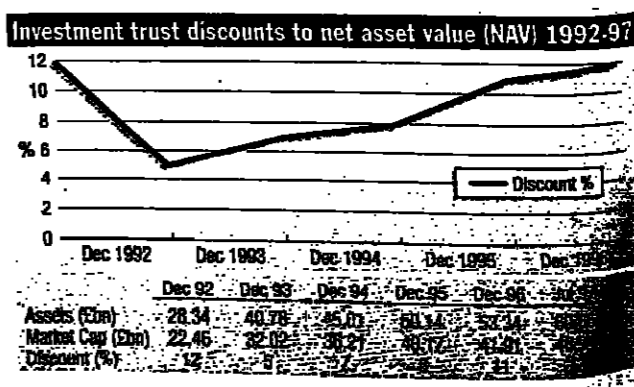
What about other trusts where interesting corporate activity is high, or has

One fund which may have seen the activities of a raiding party is Govett Oriental, in the Far East including Japan sector. The fund, which has operated at a discount to NAV of up to 17 per cent, closed to a 12.8 discount. Kleinwort Overseas, in the international capital growth sector, is another fund to watch, Ms Cooke suggests. But she warns that

speculation on this level is only suitable for sophisticated investors: "Some of the arbitrageurs are prepared to take a position many months ahead. They will also have hedged their funds, so that they are not forced to sustain heavy losses if the value of a fund were to fall."

Ultimately, Mr Cade argues, the purpose of

investing must be to obtain good value. While investment trusts are ripe for a rebound on their NAVs, hoping to force the pace at time of uncertain stock markets means risking a lot

[illegible]

You might find this a little painful...

Paying the dentist for treatment can hurt more than the work itself if you are not insured, writes Nic Cicutti

The next time your dentist asks you to open wide, make sure it's your mouth he is talking about and not your wallet. The mounting financial cost of having your teeth seen to means many people may prefer painful gums to a depleted bank balance.

NHS dental fees are set by the Government, an issue which has led many dentists to complain that they are being paid too little for the services they provide. The result has been a gradual exodus by many dentists from the state system, leaving parts of the UK and some large cities without dentists willing to offer NHS care.

Even if your dentist is prepared to see you on the NHS, costs can be high.

According to *Which?* magazine, which this month publishes a survey of dental insurance, you are required to pay 80 per cent of your dental costs up to £330 for each course of treatment. Anything over that amount, plus the remaining 20 per cent, is paid by the state.

By contrast, private treatment might cost up to £345 for a gold crown normally available on the NHS for £36, while a small filling for which you pay £4.64 on the NHS will set you back between £18 and £42 from a private practitioner.

While private dentists charge much more, arguably the service is better – at least from some members of the profession. In any case, whether or not this is true hardly matters if you are forced to go private because NHS dentists no longer practice in your area.

If you are paying private rates, insurance is one way of avoiding large and unexpected bills, while helping to spread the cost throughout the year. Some types of insurance also allow you to choose more expensive treatment, such as white fillings in back teeth instead of the metal-looking amalgam.

There are three main types of cover available: capitation, dental insurance and health care cash plans.

Dental insurance schemes		Policy name	Number of NHS GPs	Maximum age	Maximum age	Out of pocket	Waiting period (months)	Overseas cover (£)	Overseas cover (£)	Overseas cover (£)	Cost per year (£)	Notes
Capitation schemes	BUFA	Dental Cover	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6 to 18	See 6
	Denplan	Denplan Care	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5 to 15	See 5
Insurance schemes	Claire	Claire	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8.25	See 8
	WPA	WPA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8.25	See 8
Health care cash plans	Hospital cash plan	Hospital cash plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6.82	See 6
	BHSA	BHSA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7.80	See 7
The Health Scheme	Healthcare	Healthcare	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8.58	See 8
	WHCA	WHCA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8.58	See 8

Capitation schemes: These are budget plans, typically available from your local dentist. You register and are given an initial dental check based on which the practitioner decides how much you should pay on a regular basis. The average monthly cost is £10, although if your mouth looks like an indoor version of a moon crater, this can rise to £25 a week.

There are some potential snags with capitation schemes. One is that you are required to pay for work on your teeth identified in the initial check before you are allowed to join.

Expensive treatment may not be fully covered, but on the other hand cheaper cover means you won't be covered at all. Finally, dentists will only sign up to one

insurer, which means you are given no choice. The most common is Denplan, owned by PPP, which specialises in health and long-term care insurance. Dental insurance schemes: These simply repay the cost of private treatment to the dentist, with some offered by insurers as standalone policies and others part of a medical insurance package.

You typically pay about £100 a year for such a package. But major work may not be covered, while there may also be an excess, leaving you to find the first £5 to £25 of any claim. There may also be a limit to the amount paid out each year or a waiting period before you are allowed to join. As with capitation schemes, you may not be allowed to join if your teeth are not up to scratch.

Health care cash plans: The treatment you receive is a integral part of a package which may include optical treatment and maternity benefits.

Premiums are calculated on a flat-rate basis paid monthly or weekly, and do not depend on the state of your teeth. The plan then pays out a proportion of any dental bills incurred, capped at an upper limit of £100, for instance. Payment takes the form of a reimbursement to you for treatment you have already paid for. The amount you receive depends on the cover you have bought.

However, in addition to the claim limit, you may find a long initial waiting period before making the first claim effectively negates the purpose of taking out such a scheme. Namely, the nasty pain in your upper left molar that drove you to check out the cost of insurance in the first place.

Best buys in name only

The advice you receive from an IFA may not be independent, writes Simon English

How truly independent is the independent financial advice you receive? Tens of thousands of customers at Bradford & Bingley might well ask themselves this question following a row between the building society and some of its rivals, who accuse it of only recommending the products of a handful of companies that pay commission to the society.

According to the rules laid down by the Personal Investment Authority, the financial watchdog, financial advisers can either be tied to one firm and sell only that firm's products, or be totally independent, recommending from all available products.

The problem is that most big firms of independent advisers screen the products offered to investors. These so-called best-buy panels are widely used by large IFAs, though some are embarrassed to admit it.

When business newspaper *Money Marketing* tried to publish the best-buy panel of Bradford & Bingley, the largest high street IFA, its response was to threaten an injunction.

Why is the society touchy? For some time Bradford & Bingley has differentiated itself from other lenders by stressing the independence of its advice. Unlike most societies, its 400-strong team of advisers is able to recommend the most suitable pension or investment rather than just one company's, or so they say.

Yet a leaked best-buy list shows that consumers who visit B&B to buy a pension of any kind get the choice of just six products – Commercial Union, Legal & General, Scottish Widows, Standard Life, Clerical Medical or Sun Life.

All of these companies are recognised and respected providers, but some experts claim the list is too short to constitute fully independent advice. So why do they do it? Virgin Direct makes the point that all of the products listed pay commission to B&B. Why aren't any non-commission products recommended?

Virgin product development manager Martin Campbell says: "It is outrageous that customers who are told they are getting independent advice are being limited to just six pension companies out of the 70-plus in the market. I think these plans are a far cry from being the six best buys from a customer viewpoint and commission-free plans don't even get a look in."

So will you get good advice from B&B? B&B's list is based on research into the performance of the fund managers. B&B makes the point that it spends thousands of pounds on researching which products best suit its clients. Best-buy

panels are updated four times a year to keep companies on their toes.

The society claims to know precisely what kind of customers it gets and what kind of products they need. It is so confident of this, that for certain types of products there are only two options to choose from.

If you are not on our panel, B&B says, you just are not up to scratch. However, there are notable omissions from the panel. Equitable Life, NPL, Scottish Equitable and National Mutual Life are reckoned by most experts to be leading providers of pensions, but B&B doesn't think so.

Marketing manager Lynn Colman says: "We start with the same universe as everyone else, but we screen lower. As we know our client base and what our customers' needs are, using best-buy panels enables us to look at the best products for our customers."

The plus point is that B&B is able to get deals for customers by being able to promise bulk sales. This could mean that it negotiates lower charges or special product enhancements.

On the downside, it could also mean that the society can demand high amounts of commission. Companies desperate to buy business and force themselves onto panels are offering higher and higher commission rates, up to 40 per cent more than that paid to small IFAs.

It would be a matter of grave concern if the best-buy tables started to reflect the providers with the deepest pockets rather than the best products.

B&B's rivals among IFA firms claim that six companies is far too short a list to pick from and that the use of best-buy panels makes a mockery of independent advice.

Charles Levett-Scrivenor at leading IFA firm Towry Law says: "If their advisers have got so few options, how can it be independent advice, even if they are good options?"

The PIA says it keeps a close eye on best-buy panels and will stamp down hard on any IFA which gives more than 20 per cent of its business to one company. Spokeswoman Sarah Modlock says: "Firms must ensure that clients receive suitable advice."

"Clearly this would not be the case where an independent firm restricts itself to using the same small number of product providers and refuses to discuss products of firms outside that group."

For consumers, the question they ought to be asking next time they speak to a supposedly independent adviser should be: "Who else could you have recommended and how independent are you?"

The Index-Tracking PEP

WHAT MAKES LEGAL & GENERAL'S FTSE ALL-SHARE INDEX-TRACKING PEP THE BEST VALUE PEP OF ITS KIND ON THE MARKET?

A glance at the table will show that – since its launch just over 18 months ago – this Index-Tracking PEP from Legal & General has proved that it offers PEP investors unbeatable value for money.

It follows the FTSE All-Share Index. This Index reflects the performance of the entire stockmarket, so it reduces the risk of being over-exposed to shares which under-perform and lessen your return. In fact, £6,000 invested in the Legal & General Index-Tracking PEP at launch would now be worth £8,412* compared to just £7,667* in the average UK Income & Growth Trust.

NO
initial charges
0.5%
annual management charge
NO
withdrawal fee

UNBEATABLE COSTS...

At just 0.5% p.a., you won't find a better value FTSE All-Share Index-Tracking PEP anywhere else. And there are still no initial charges or withdrawal fees to pay.

To find out more about the UK's best value FTSE All-Share Index-Tracking PEP, call now, or return the coupon opposite. Alternatively, you can contact us at <http://www.legal-and-general.co.uk>

*Source: Microcap/LGIM, on an offer to bid basis based on all PEP charges with gross income re-invested from 01.11.95 (since launch) to 07.07.97. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. Both capital and income values may go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount invested. Tax assumptions are those currently applicable and are subject to statutory change. The value of tax relief will depend on your individual circumstances. All comparisons of cost apply to PEPs investing wholly in Unit Trusts. Full written details are available on request. All statements are correct as at 07.07.97. Legal & General (Direct) Limited, Registered in England No. 2702090. Registered Office: Temple Court, 11 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4N 4TP. Representative only of the Legal & General marketing group, members of which are regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and IMRO for the purposes of recommending, advising on and selling life assurance and investment products bearing Legal & General's name.

INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE SINCE LAUNCH NOV 95 TO JULY 97		
	ANNUAL CHARGE	GROWTH
Legal & General	0.50%	40.21%
Gartmore	1.00%	38.84%
Kleinwort Benson	1.00%	38.52%
Virgin	1.00%	38.25%
Average UK Income & Growth Trust	—	27.79%

The FTSE All-Share Index-Tracking PEP that performs the best

(also costs the least)

TRANSFER YOUR WINFALL SHARES FREE

Find out more now - Phone free 0500 11 66 22

FREEPHONE 8am TO 8pm WEEKDAYS 9am TO 5pm WEEKENDS PLEASE QUOTE REF: B4DJ12

For your protection calls will usually be recorded and randomly monitored.

Post to: Legal & General (Direct) Limited, FREEPOST SWC0467, Cardiff CF1 1YW. Please send me full written details of the Legal & General Index-Tracking PEP.

Surname (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)

Forenames

Address

Postcode

Date of birth

Tel. No: Home

Tel. No: Work

If you already have any PEP investment, please tick here ☐

B4DJ12

We may telephone you to make sure information requested has arrived safely. Now and then, we may tell you about other products or services offered by the Legal & General Group of companies that we believe may be of interest to you. If you would prefer not to receive this carefully selected information, please tick here ☐

Legal & General Investment Management

Gerard Gilbert recommends **Match of the Day** Sat 11

I mean. The enduring message was that he had been encouraged by his father to enlist under-ages, running across the battlefield, his jaw missing and tears streaming down his face. He was 16 and no one saw him again.

Four, after much trumpeting, finally goes to Ghyneboura (Sat C4) for Rossini's *Le Comte Ory*, and *The Dynastys* (Sat C4) for Rossini's *La Cenerentola*.

The Nehru-Gandhi Story (Sat BBC2) gets to Indira. Nehru daughter was consistently underestimated — she was ugly, poor son and Kosygin). She was unintelligent, she would disappear in a military coup. In the end the coup was all hers. Breeding would out, however, and after 18 months of "emergency" India called for an election. Her son, Sanjay, was appalled at India's tradition of democracy, it seems, was what was salvageable when Sanjay's light aircraft crashed, taking its pilot with it.

After the punchiness of *Planet Islam*, this week's *Omnibus* (Sun BBC1) is annoyingly diffuse. It's a film about Rudyard Kipling – a search for the secret Kipling – as possibly revealed by his lost manuscript *Mother Maturin*. Did the poet of Empire have a secret love – maybe a native Indian girl. But before we get involved in all this, we have to get to know our narrator, a first agent called Mace Richards, and interest our-

ITV/Regions

- ANGLIA**
As London except: 1.20pm Anglia News and
Weather (80458809). 1.25 Film: Topaz
(29972880). 3.50 seaQuest DSV (3787286).
5.05 Anglia News, Sport and Weather (2893644).
5.20 Cartoon (9958002). 12.15 Film: The
Chase (302805). 1.55 Rockmania (6181768).
2.55 Film: Desert Rats (2509872). 4.05 Jones
and Jerry (34432519). 4.35 - 5.30am Comedy
(7215229).

- CENTRAL**
As London except: 1.20pm Central News and
Weather (80458809). 1.25 Airlwolf (6760170).
2.20 Film: Please Turn Over* (191199). 3.55 Bay-
watch (3499915). 5.05 Central News and
Weather (99448809). 5.10 ITV Sport Classics
(2801625). 4.10 Jobfinder (9475942). 5.20
5.30am Asian Eye (6376045).

- MTV WALES**
As London except: 1.20pm HTV News
(80458809). 1.25 HTV Sport Mini Classics
(80444080). 1.30 seaQuest DSV (5276996)
2.20 The Cosby Mysteries (4544335). 3.15 Film
The Rescue (782808). 5.05 HTV Wales News
(2813460). 5.15 Courtroom Time (2819644). 12.15
(2813460). 5.30 (302085). 1.55 Rockman
Film: The Chase (302085). 2.55 Film: Desert Rats (2509872). 4.35
(6181768). 2.55 Film: Desert Rats (2509872). 4.35
4.05 James and Jury (34432519). 4.35
5.30am Comedy Central (3215229).

- MTV WEST**
As HTV Wales except: 1.25pm West Match Week
end (80440880). 3.15 Flims: Rising Damp
(782880). 5.05 - 5.15pm HTV West News at
Weather (2813460).
- MERIDIAN**
As London except: 1.20pm Meridian News at
Weather (80458809). 1.25 Tall Ships 9
(10885151). 1.55 Flims: Guns of the Magnific
Seven (41352373). 3.50 seaQuest D
Seven (41352373). 3.50 seaQuest D

- WESTCOUNTRY**
As London except: 1.20pm Westcountry News
(51535267). 1.30 The 1997 Westcountry Surf
Festival (41644). 2.00 Film: The Amazing
Capitaine Corcoran (489606). 3.55 Thunder in Paradise
Memo (489606).

Satellite/cable

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 7.00am My Little Pony (34593). | 8.00 |
| 7.30 Street Straks (22118). | 8.00 |
| Press Your Luck (32422). | 8.30 Love |
| Connection (31793). | 9.00 Quantum |
| Leap (36996). | 10.00 Kung Fu |
| (11002). | 11.00 Legends of the Hidden |
| City (95915). | 11.30 Sea Rescue |
| (96644). | 12.00 World Wrestling Federa- |
| tion Live Wire (81286). | 1.00 |
| World Wrestling Federation Shot Gun | |
| Challenge (67606). | 2.00 Star Trek |
| (64606). | 3.00 Star Trek: The Next |
| Generation (90460). | 4.00 Star Trek: |
| Deep Space Nine (86267). | 5.00 Star |
| Trek Voyager (6731). | 6.00 Xena: |

- Warrior Princess (70170). 7.00 Hercules: The Legendary Journeys (20199). 8.00 Coppers (3880). 8.30 Cops I (2915). 9.00 Cops II (75151). 9.30 LAPD (82915). 10.00 Law and Order (12170). 11.00 LA Law (12731). 12.00 The Movie Show (76836). 12.30 LAPD (31687).

- 1.00 Dream On (192133). 1.30 Saturday Night, Sunday Morning (215590). 2.00-6.00am Hit Mix (2166132).
- SKY 2**
7.00pm Superboy (9064147). 7.30 Superboy (5274064). 8.00 Kung Fu (8684335). 9.00 Pacific Drive (8687422). 11.00 In the Heat of the Night (8635625). 12.00-6.00am Hit Mix Long Play (8537958).
- MOVIE CHANNEL**
6.30am Little Orbit the Astrodog (8038737). 7.45 Prince of Foxes* (83112557). 9.35 Abbott and

- Cosello Meet The Mummy"
(7190444). 1. Rattle
Dance (68743735). 12 This Is
My Affair! (669880). 2 Young In-
dians Jones and the Attack of the
Gawwans (U34444). 4 Karate Kid
II (H9777). 100 Apollo 11 (CZ828)
8.00 Rob Roy (R8183538). 10.20
Candyman; Farewell to the Flesh
(498286). 1.20 Hostile Intentions
(23519). 1.30 Threesome
(756671). 3.05 Page (S34595).
4.45-6.05am Abbott and Costello
Meet The Mummy" (#4157300).
- ### **SIX MONIES**
- 6.00am When Time Run Out
(50712). 8.00 The Long Summer of
the Solitaires (B2826). 10.00
Princes for a Day (P3734606). 11.40
D2: The Mighty Ducks (A6913828),
1.30 Memories Me (E29741002).
The Adventures of He-Man (M3)
 - (SO599335). 5.00m When Time
Run Out (L1170), 7.00 D2: The Mighty
Ducks (E8195), 9.00 When Saturday
Comes (V7002). 11.00 The New
York Times' A Girl on a Bike (F73157).
12.20 Circumstances Unknown
(S97329). 1.55 Benders!
(M84381). 3.45-6.05am The Man
Next Door (25078661).

..ARTHRITIS NEEDN'T BE

The Arthritis and Rheumatism Council for Research celebrates its Diamond Jubilee in 1996 and is the only major UK charity financing medical research into osteoarthritis and rheumatic diseases at most university hospitals and medical schools in the UK.

There is real hope that with continued research these destructive diseases can be beaten. With your help we can continue the battle to find a cure.

Please send me: **Your FREE Information Pack** ☐
Your FREE Legacy/How to Make a Will Pack ☐

enclose: ☐ £31 ☐ £47 ☐ £119 my gift of £

Name:

Address:

Postcode: DT9 5ZB
To: The Arthritis & Rheumatism Council,
FREEPOST, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S41 7BR.
ARTHRITIS RESEARCH

ARTHRITIS RESEARCH
A Registered Charity.
Patron: HRH The Duchess of Kent.

**REMEMBER-ARTHRITIS
RESPECTS NOBODY**

1

school's out

Gordon's rate of interest has never flagged, rising steadily throughout the term

david aaronovitch

The Prime Minister is to issue an annual report, commenting on the progress of his government. An early draft was lying on the desk of a minister I went to see recently, and I managed to read it upside down. In the interest of open government, I reproduce it here.

"To all parents and stakeholders: Hi! It's been a fantastically busy first term of the new parliament. On the whole, the Government has done extremely well, adjusting to the new offices very quickly and with the minimum of disruption. Our review groups are now looking at virtually every aspect of administration and policy, and will be reporting well before the end of the century. Which is not – if I may remind you – very far away!

In the meantime, these are my interim reports on your ministers. I hope that you find them instructive and useful.

John: Has had – for him – a quiet term. He has, I think, begun to realise that his occasional over-enthusiasm has led to his taking on too many different things at once. The transport project, especially the Birmingham ring-road, has not quite been the success that he hoped for, and has led to John failing to grip the Nature Studies part of the course. *Effort: A minus; Achievement: C minus.*

Jack: Has set about his task with his usual grim determination, so I've actually seen very little of him! Seems to be achieving a nice balance between liberalism and firmness, but I do wonder where he's keeping all those prisoners! *Effort: B plus; Achievement: B double plus.*

Gordon: Beneath that gloomy exterior there is a very clever chap indeed! His innovative work on the Bank of England has been the talk of the Government, and his rate of interest has never flagged, rising steadily throughout the term. I hope he doesn't find the rest of the work too taxing. *Effort: A; Achievement: A minus.*

Clare: An excellent start! Last term's distressing tendency towards indiscipline has been almost completely eradicated, leaving her free to concentrate on what she loves

best, travelling and sympathising. I thought I'd never be able to say this, but she is an asset to the government! *Effort: B; Achievement: C plus.*

Robin: Difficulties at home have not prevented him from making his mark. His landmark essay "Morality in Foreign Policy" was the talk of the Christian Society, attracting a great deal of favourable comment. Now let's see how he puts it into practice! His forthcoming trip to Indonesia should prove stimulating. *Effort: A minus; Achievement: B double plus.*

Prefects: Peter tells me that morale is good, and that almost everybody is pulling their weight. The plan to send work teams into the vegetable garden to occupy them during slack periods is now close to fruition. Also the work on the Dome is well under way, and under Peter's inspired leadership, should provide us all with a memorable evening on 31 December 1999.

Matron's Report: Although there are signs of improvement in attendance and punctuality, Miss Harman is concerned that there are still too many who stop work at the smallest sign of illness, or who still refuse to take on tasks that they consider beneath them. A new system of encouraging less hardworking girls and boys to pull their fingers out is about to be introduced.

Trips: It is important that ministers get out and experience life in other countries. I myself have accompanied several such delegations, and although all have been hard work (especially the weekend in Amsterdam) nevertheless a good time was had by all.

Sports: Mr Banks tells me that the First XI has enjoyed mixed fortunes against the Australian boys with a splendid win followed by a couple of disappointing results. Sports day last week was also something of a let-down, with too many of our athletes performing below par. Let us hope that the soccer team will enjoy better fortune next year on their world tour!

All in all, a terrific term – and a year of achievement in prospect. I hope you share my excitement! *Tony Blair*

by Sara Maitland

This month marks the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Mary Shelley, the author of *Frankenstein*, a novel that has proved astonishingly influential and effective, having all the qualities of a genuine myth.

Mary Shelley was the daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin. Mary Wollstonecraft is now best known as the writer of *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* and the founder of modern feminism, but in her own day she was as notorious for her support of the French Revolution and her unconventional lifestyle. Godwin was a leading rationalist, a significant political philosopher, and a libertarian Jacobin. Much was expected of their child; particularly as Wollstonecraft died in childbirth.

At 16 Mary fell in love with the young Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, a disciple of her father's who had been expelled from Oxford for writing *The Necessity of Atheism* and, although he was married with two children, ran off with him: at which point her father rejected her entirely – despite his previous advocacy of Free Love.

The young couple lived an itinerant life over the next two years, during which Mary suffered a miscarriage and the death of her premature daughter. The couple were clearly very close but Shelley, who was both intellectually brilliant and emotionally volatile, was demanding to live with. The summer of 1816 found them living near Geneva with Lord Byron (by whom Mary's half-sister was pregnant) and their surviving child. Byron and Shelley had formed a friendship of extraordinary intensity, which always contained a strong element of competition.

In this highly charged atmosphere Mary Shelley conceived and wrote *Frankenstein*: a macabre Gothic tale of a brilliant and talented young man who starts out with a proper desire for learning and knowledge, but gets too ambitious. He withdraws from the world and normal human contact into his laboratory and pulls off the greatest victory of all scientific imagination – he constructs a body out of bits of dead flesh, and galvanises it. Far from this turning out to be an exciting and hopeful breakthrough for humanity, the consequences are horrendous.

Frankenstein's creation is horribly botched: unlike nature's creation, it is neither beautiful nor lovable. It is destructive, vengeful, and very dangerous. (Interestingly, the piece of the story that is least prominent in all the retellings is Mary Shelley's central question – is the monster evil

because it is unloved, or unlovable because it is evil?) The monster brutally destroys everything its creator loves – friends, and family, and sanity. Finally, Frankenstein has to sacrifice his life to destroy his own creation. Nothing good comes of this supremely creative act.

reference way beyond the cinematic. It is unusual for any pervasive cultural myth to have a known and named author. It is even more unusual for such an author to be a teenage girl.

Why did it work so well? What nerve is it that *Frankenstein* touched and still touches?

From the moment of publication it struck a chord. Dr Frankenstein represents many of our deeper beliefs about scientists – in fact he forms these beliefs

Although it is written with an enormous emotional power, *Frankenstein* was not the first Gothic horror novel, and it was not the first science fiction novel either, but from the moment of its first publication in 1818 it struck a chord, whose reverberations seem to increase still. It is unusual for a novel so to escape from its origins. Almost every eight-year-old in this country now knows the name and something of the story – however botched, confused and reinterpreted – of the hero of a radical, literary, intellectual novel written over 150 years ago. (Although Boris Karloff may have something to answer for, the fame of this story is not based simply on a film version. The game "Frankenstein" has a cultural

The French Revolution destabilised Europe. It raised hopes that reason could perfect humanity and then dashed those hopes. It also led directly to the devastating Napoleonic Wars – which ended only the year before *Frankenstein* was written. And it left Europe with a profound tension between the liberating, life-enhancing capacities of human knowledge and the dangers (moral, practical and imaginative) of "interfering with nature".

It is a conflict which has not been resolved in the subsequent two centuries and is seen most clearly in the life sciences, particularly medicine: will reducing pain in childbirth undermine maternal devotion? Will organ transplants change personal-

"unnatural" lengths to get them.

Robots, cyborgs and clones (artificial people) are the "baddies" of popular science fiction – from the film *Blade Runner* (where it is taken as a given that it is essential to work out who is a "real" human and who is not, even though it is well nigh impossible to discover any difference whatsoever) right down to the crassest children's TV cartoon, in which human heroes can take on the characteristics of robots, while the villains are technological constructions which take on the appearance of humanity.

Because of such fears, scientists have become what priests and wizards were – they are different from "us". In exchange for their enor-

mous power, they are required to sacrifice certain sorts of normality, whether simple practical skills (professors are "absent-minded" just as saints often were) or more profound satisfactions (like normal human relationships). But these sacrifices make them even more alarming. Scientists

Dr Frankenstein carries great psychological conviction, which is far more important than factual credibility. He is a true tragic hero, noble but flawed. He represents many of our deeper beliefs about what scientists are like; in fact he forms these beliefs. But more importantly, Mary Shelley created a powerful narrative: myths are not just symbols or metaphors or abstract theories; they are always stories. Stories that put in order what we want to think.

One of the problems with myths is that you never know they are myths until you don't need them any longer. *Frankenstein* is a story. Mary Shelley made it up. She despised convention, and conventional thinking. Perhaps we should celebrate this bicentenary by recognising how useful her novel has been, by accepting we have made a mythology out of it, and by treating it as we do earlier myths – by demythologising it, and setting ourselves free from some of our fears. Easier said than done.

Even the nurses are suffering

Please help Oxfam in North Korea

On Wednesday's TV news we showed you children so weak, they needed propping up by nurses, who were hungry and sick themselves.

They're suffering because of two years of floods, followed by drought. Because two-thirds of the maize harvest has failed. Because people have to forage to survive.

An estimated 600,000 North Korean children are suffering from malnutrition. Here's your chance to help.

Please make a donation to Oxfam today.

credit card donations
01865 312231

Yes, I want to help people in North Korea

£25 □ £50 □ £100 □ £250 □ £

Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms

Address

Postcode

Please send to: Oxfam, Room B212, FREEPOST, Oxford OX2 7BR.

Oxfam United Kingdom and Ireland is a member of Oxfam International. Registered Charity No. 202928



Tony Blair, the first African PM

Sorry, but when we're down "Mandelson manipulates the press" and "Labour proclaims achievements of its first 100 days by promising an annual report" you know that domestic politics is on holiday. Turn to the entertainment pages, and we discover the Princess of Wales, as usual. Mr Dodi Fayed may not know it yet, but he has been selected to be the latest candidate for a media death-by-Diana, the fate that inevitably meets anyone standing too close to the Princess. The irony of her campaign to ban landmines is that she is herself a sort of social hand grenade, ready to explode, leaving unsuspecting playboys legless and broken.

However, there are still events happening around the world. I'm sure that Mr Blair is watching with a keen eye from his Tuscan holiday home, because the team is always on the lookout for models of government to enhance his mission, aka The Project.

We know from the welfare-to-work programme that Australia and New Zealand have been under scrutiny, as has the United States, if only because Friend Bill has made so many avoidable mistakes. At one point I feared that The Project was going to be the creation of a proto-Canada – Dullsville on Sunday. But I think that I have finally worked out where The



Trevor Phillips

The phrases could just as easily be drawn from speeches by Nyerere, Kenyatta or Mugabe as from the New Labour lexicon

Project is actually heading. Tony is an African, though in the political sense, rather than the biological. If he has a modern political hero, it is Nelson Mandela; if he has a spectre at his feast, it is Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire.

Look at the facts. Labour has come to power after decades of corrupt, partisan government, pledging to destroy political tribalism. Their troops have marched for many years, often with little hope of victory and in the face of doubt from the people and hostility from the organs of civil society (yes, *The Sun* qualifies). At last, at last there is a breakthrough, and a sense of liberation across the nation. It seems that everyone has been waiting for this moment, and even those who appeared to be in cahoots with the *ancien régime* now cheer along with the rest.

The rhetoric is characteristic – "heal the wounds", "end privilege", "unify the people". The phrases could just as easily be drawn from speeches by Nyerere, Kenyatta, Mugabe, Nkrumah as from the New Labour lexicon. The new leaders are men and women of iron discipline. They take hold of the reins of power vowing that the old days should never be allowed to return.

They are inclusive and forgiving. Mr Mandela appointed whites to key posts in his government, and set up the Truth Commission to absolve his former persecutors; Mr Blair has recruited businessmen, and given house room to the Social Democrats who helped to pitch his party out of power for a generation. They inject a new style – Mr Mandela blinds us with his shirts, Mr Blair charms us with his informality. And they set about creating what they call a new politics that will put an end to division. It is when we hit the politics that we run into difficult territory.

In Africa, as in Britain, the historic political obstacle to modernisation is tribalism. In South Africa, that includes the white tribes; here we may call them classes, but we all know which party is supposed to represent our interests. Like most African leaders, the Blair team has clearly decided that the party political framework, when combined with these archaic loyalties, could derail The Project. Thus virtually every move they make has to undermine that framework, in spite of the fact that it has given them a huge, overwhelming mandate.

There, Mr Mandela brings minority parties into the cabinet; here, the Liberal Democrats join a cabinet committee. There they purge the party of undesirables like Mrs Mandela; here they neutralise the

disruptive party conference. There they decentralise power massively, creating regional assemblies and provincial prime ministers; here we get devolution and a new style of government for London. There they turn up at football matches and concerts – remember Mr Mandela at the World Cup Rugby Finals in a Springbok shirt? Here, though Mr Blair at Chelsea is not that remarkable, since he's been going for umpteen years, Mr Fisher, the Arts minister, goes to Glastonbury – truly amazing.

All this is fine. Where we may become a little nervous is the bit that follows – an attempt to defeat tribalism by embracing every strand of opinion within the governing party. This need not be a one-party state, but it could be as near as dammit. In Africa, they tend to acknowledge that there is only one party of government and then introduce long and cumbersome methods of establishing consensus, which eventually give a result, usually too late and too complex to be of much use. The South African model is rather like this, and in the space of reviews and commissions and focus groups set up by New Labour one can see this tendency emerging.

Unfortunately, in Africa, many also believe that in a dangerously unstable situation, only one thing can prevent the

divisive tendencies re-emerging, and that is to stick together the main party political interests, find a place for everyone in government and ensure that there is no basis for destabilisation – by which is usually meant, no basis for anyone else to take over the government.

Some versions of this tendency invent vigorous federal structures to ensure that the national government does not simply do as it likes – its powers are limited and its actions are scrutinised. An example of this would be the old Tanzanian ruler, Julius Nyerere, who got his way by charm, cunning and sheer intellectual force. Some countries forget to install any checks on the power of central government and are ready to use its power to deliver what it believes is good for the people, whether they like it or not; check out Mobutu.

Of course we hope that Mr Blair's version will be Mandela rather than Mobutu. For a straw in the wind, look towards Mr Nyerere's Tanzania. The old man originated the Blairish phrase "the Third Way" (between communism and capitalism), gave us an African version of what New Labour is currently calling "inclusion," and insisted that he did not have to follow anyone else's doctrines. Oh – and he gave Peter Mandelson his first job, teaching for a year in the bush.

leaders merely give legitimacy to which falls far short of the real.

The official nature of the Christian reconciliation always confronts the political and economic power and Reconciliation Commission achieving probably the best that has been achieved in the present South African political context without provoking backlash from the white community. It should learn from South African experience. It will have its own exercise when, and if, peace comes north of Ireland.

market report / shares



Sterling effort from second-liners as blue chips slump

MARKET REPORT

MAGNUS GRIMOND

The further slide in the pound induced a bout of schizophrenia among market-makers yesterday, with the heavyweight stocks which have led this year's charge tumbling back and the second-liners taking up the running for a change. Banks and pharmaceuticals were in the forefront of the ragged retreat from Thursday's all-time high, leaving the FTSE 100 index flailing with a collapse back through the 5,000 barrier.

It ended 55.5 points lower at 4650.5, having touched 5009.4 at lunch-time on fears for Wall Street. Interest rate fears sent the Dow Jones plummeting, but despite a fall just shy of 110 points by the time London closed, bottom-fishers had returned by then to leave the UK market off its lows.

Lloyds TSB, one of the high-fliers this year, lost 24.5p to 753.5p as profits-takers moved in to take advantage of the shares' strong run on the back of sparkling profit figures earlier in the week. Positive noises from SBC Warburg, HSBC James Capel and Dresdner Kleinwort Benson could not prevent Barclays slipping 26.5p to £14.21p. Otherwise it was the Scots which suffered the most damage, with Royal Bank of Scotland a leading casualty in the sector, down 20p to 629.5p, and Bank of Scotland slipping 10.5p to 436.5p.

Drugs, too, suddenly lacked the protection for investors they seemed to have while the pound was rampant. The two-way pull in Zeneca evident on Thursday after the interim figures went the other way yesterday, dragging the shares back 62p to £19.50. Its peers faced only a little better, with Glaxo Wellcome slipping 39p to £12.87 and SmithKline Beecham giving up 30.5p to £11.67.

Other former "safe haven" stocks to receive a bloody nose yesterday were to be found among the oil and retailing sectors. Shell Transport & Trading was the third-biggest faller in the index, relinquishing 15p to 443.5p, the shares hastened on their way by disappointing figures on Thursday. Lasso, which has basked in the glow of the market since its recent results, fell 8.5p to 279p.

But what the pound lashed away, it also gave back. Yesterday's fall in the currency, taking the three-day fall to around 14 pence against the German mark, left a swathe of British industry breathing a collective sigh of relief. Smiths Industries, having

just tied up an agreed bid for medical equipment to gas monitoring group Graseby, was a big gainer as the currency move relieved pressure on its overseas earnings. The shares bounded 37p to 870.5p. LucasVarity was another foreign earner in the vanguard of the market's rise, picking up 9p to 217.5p, while other engineers not far behind. TI added 22p to 615.5p and GKN, another company to delight with results this week, putting on another 39p to £12.26.

Share Price Data
Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, including exceptional items.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide. For a detailed description of the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250, see the FT Index Guide.

business & city

Business news desk: tel 0171-298 2636 fax 0171-298 2098
DEPUTY BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: MICHAEL HARRISON

FINANCIAL JOURNAL
OF THE YEAR

Pound's plunge prompts shift from blue chips

Tom Stevenson
Financial Editor

The pound plunged on the foreign exchange markets yesterday as currency traders responded to a hint from the Bank of England on Thursday that no further interest rate rises were necessary in the short term.

On the stock market, the fall in sterling prompted a shift out of the high-flying FTSE100 index of leading companies into exporters and other second-line stocks that have missed out on the market's surge.

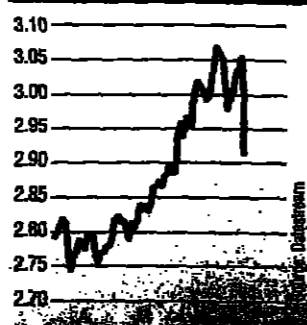
Sterling tumbled another 5 pence to DM2.92, 14 pence or almost 5 per cent down on its recent high of DM3.06 against the German currency. The fall was a continuing reaction to comments from the Bank of England, as it raised base rates for the fourth time in as many months, that the cost of money was now consistent with its inflation target.

The Bank's carefully worded statement, accompanying the rise in base rate from 6.75 to 7 per cent, was seen as a clever way of keeping the lid on consumer spending while at the same time avoiding the collateral damage to industry of a sky-high pound. Despite its success, economists said yesterday they did not expect the Bank to make a habit of talking the pound up or down.

Sterling's fall, after its dramatic 25 per cent rise since the beginning of the year, gave a shot in the arm to the FTSE250 index of medium-sized stocks, which closed 52.3 points higher at 4650.5 compared with a 35.5-point fall in the FTSE 100, which closed at 5,031.3.

The leading index was driven lower by Wall Street, which traded sharply lower as investors fretted about reports due next week on inflation and retail sales. Worries that inter-

DM to the £



est rates will have to rise in the US have pushed bond yields higher, emphasising the perceived over-valuation of American shares.

The rise in London's second-liners ended a long period of underperformance that has seen the smaller stocks lag the leading index by 18 per cent since January as investors flocked to the financials and pharmaceuticals that dominate the top flight.

The mid-cap index is loaded with exporters, engineers and other companies highly exposed to foreign, especially European, markets. During the next few holiday weeks, in which few companies are expected to report results, the stock market is expected to be unusually susceptible to currency movements.

One trader said: "I expect to see more switching into 250 stocks, but remember that this is the silly season when the market is more vulnerable to erratic moves."

The markets will have to contend with a stream of economic data in the next week, with Monday's producer prices numbers followed by retail prices on Tuesday and unemployment and average earnings figures midweek. Also on Wednesday, the Bank of England will issue its quarterly in-

flation Report and the minutes of last month's meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee.

Beneficiaries of the pound's fall yesterday included engineers Smiths Industries, Lucas Varity and CKN as well as building stocks such as Blue Circle and RMC, which are among the stocks most vulnerable to movements in interest rates.

The Bank of England was only given the freedom to set interest rates in May, since when it has nudged the rate upwards four times. Its advice to increase rates had been consistently ignored for months by former Conservative Chancellor Kenneth Clarke in the run-up to the general election.

According to Alison Cottrell, chief economist at Paine Webber: "The Bank of England has only now got to where it is happy, its neutral starting point with interest rates."

She added: "They moved in slow steps, but this built the expectation that they would do another small step every time. They've said, 'In case you are worried, we think we've got to where we want to be now.' It's quite comforting, because it implies that had they thought they needed a half-point increase, they would have done it."

Despite the hint from the Bank that it would hold off for a few months before raising rates again, most economists still expect base rates to rise again with some believing the peak in the current cycle could be as high as 8.5 per cent.

The Bank did not receive universal praise for its intervention. Richard Jeffrey, group economist at Charterhouse, said: "I think there is a great danger that when policymakers get involved in currency markets they tend to come off worst. The currency has to be allowed to find its own level."

Institutional investors call for the resignation of the chairman of United Utilities



Sir Desmond Pitcher: His £310,000 salary has been criticised Photograph: Edward Webb

Survival battle for Sir Desmond

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Sir Desmond Pitcher, the embattled chairman of United Utilities, will come under severe pressure to resign next week when a senior non-executive director tells him of intense investor unrest.

It emerged yesterday that Sir Peter Middleton, chairman of BZW and viewed as the City as United's most senior non-executive, held meetings with 10 big investors over the past few days to gauge reaction to the surprise ousting of Brian Staples as chief executive.

Sir Peter was left in no doubt from the meetings that the majority of investors would only be satisfied by Sir Desmond's swift departure. One institution said: "We told him it was not credible even to downgrade Sir Desmond to a non-executive chairman's role. The best recent comparison is with Yorkshire Water, where they got rid of the old board and brought in a new management team."

The investor said United, which is due to announce the outcome of an operational review by October, had to address its "dramatic underperformance" compared with other utility companies. He added: "What does Sir Des do to justify his huge pay package?" Sir Desmond has a basic salary of £310,000.

Another large shareholder saw United's problems as the first test of the Hampel proposals to beef up corporate governance rules.

Sir Desmond refused to give interviews yesterday, with advisers fearing his comments could inflame tensions further. "There's a lot of speculation but no institution has given its name to any of these stories. We can't comment on rumour and speculation," United shares slipped further yesterday, dropping 9.5p to 701p.

At United's annual shareholders meeting in Manchester last month Sir Desmond brushed off resignation speculation. "I've no intention of resigning. I have worked to build this company up," he said.

It was unclear whether Sir Desmond was made aware of Sir Peter's discussions before they began, though sources close to the company said the chairman was kept "fully informed".

The chairman had apparently not intended to justify his position further until the review concluded in the autumn and was said yesterday to be unlikely to change his mind. The Pitcher camp sought to defuse speculation of a rift with Sir Peter, arguing that the talks were merely to clarify the succession issue for when Sir Desmond retires on 2000.

Thomson warns of rise in holiday costs

Andrew Yates

Thomson, the UK's largest tour operator and travel agent, warned yesterday that holiday prices could rise by more than 10 per cent, equivalent to at least £60 on a typical summer holiday costing £600, as a result of controversial proposals being considered by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission to overhaul the travel market to make it more competitive.

The changes, which may

include forcing tour operators to sell travel agents or rename them self and preventing agents tying holiday discounts to travel insurance, could also lead to wide scale redundancies across the industry according to industry insiders.

However, the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO) refuted the claims. It said the current structure of the industry was anti-competitive and accused the larger tour operators of acting 'dishonestly' by using their monopoly to limit customer choice and squeeze smaller travel groups out of the market.

The MMC has criticised

travel groups for failing to make the link between tour operators and travel agents clear. There are concerns that tour operators can restrict customer choice by using its travel agency branches to promote its own products in preference to rivals. The MMC is also worried that travel agents only stock brochures of those other tour operators that offer them large commissions and the practice of tying insurance to discounts misleads customers.

"Large tour operators attract customers by offering discounts. But they are basically pretty dishonest, typically charging a family £117 for travel insurance, compared to £50 at a smaller travel agent," said an AITO spokeswoman said yesterday.

Martin Brakenbury, a director of Thomson Travel said yesterday: "We plan to fight the MMC tooth and nail over this. It could push prices up well over 10 per cent."

Takeover-spotting keeps bank sector on the boil

The stock market's love affair with the banking sector showed no sign of abating this week. With the notable exception of NatWest, all the banks to have reported their results in the past two weeks have received well-deserved accolades ranging from the warm to the frankly ecstatic. Barclays brought proceedings to a dramatic end on Thursday, with the promise of a bigger share buy-back than expected sending its shares into the stratosphere.

Being fully invested in the banks over the past year or so has been the only sure way of participating in the soaring stock market. With more than a quarter of the value of the FTSE 100 accounted for by the financial sector, the banks have rightly been the market's mainstay. A year ago Lloyd's shares were trading at 72p, now they are worth 742p.

There are good reasons for that dramatic rerating of banking shares. In an environment of low inflation coupled with sustainable growth, the earnings quality of financial institutions improves as fewer companies go bust. Banks have also become much better at managing their costs and weeding out underperforming businesses.

Importantly, capital is being managed as a scarce resource rather than as the "free" source

of funds it has been viewed as in the past.

But what has surprised some analysts in the past two weeks is the extent to which share prices, which should already have factored in much of that good news, have continued to rise despite a set of results that have been good but not stunningly so.

Barclays, for example, reported a modest 8 per cent rise in underlying profits but saw its shares add the best part of 10 per cent on the day of its results.

What appears to have happened is a shift in focus from the fundamental attractions of the sector - where there are quite serious worries about the incursion of the former building societies and a persistent squeeze on margins - to its potential for consolidation.

Investors are increasingly looking for the next takeover candidate, regardless of its underlying prospects.

That consolidation needs to take place has been clear for a number of years, but it has taken the movement of the former building societies into product lines traditionally seen as the preserve of the clearing

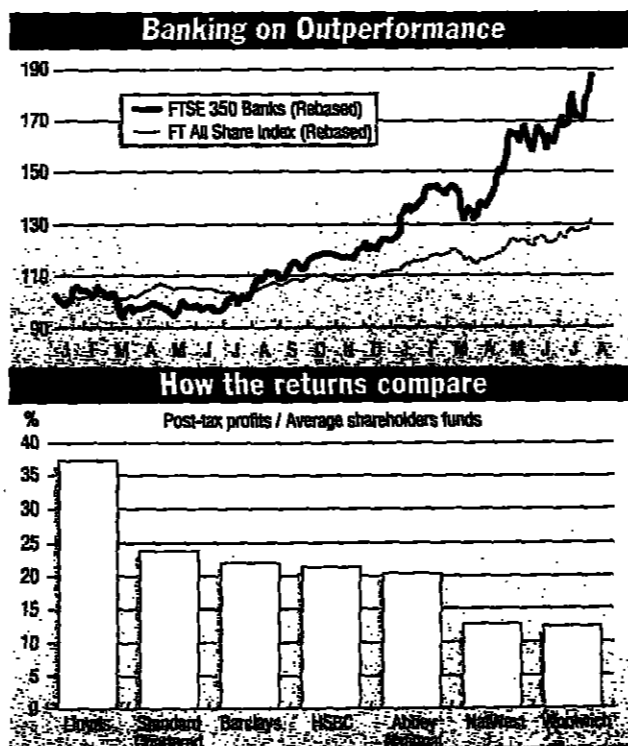
banks to concentrate minds on the over-supply of banks on British high streets.

Another interesting feature of the reporting season has been the extent to which generalities about the banks have become invalid.

The seven banks in the table below are producing very different returns on their capital because they have become very different sorts of companies. The forces driving a global player such as HSBC are plainly very different from those driving Lloyds TSB, which has made a conscious and successful decision to focus on the retail side of the domestic market.

The star of the season was undoubtedly Lloyds TSB, where the potential for further cost-cutting from the merger of its constituent parts in 1995 continues to boost expectations. It has avoided the temptation of battling it out in the competitive investment banking world and seen its return on capital soar to a massive 40 per cent as a result.

At Barclays, the battle to turn BZW around appears to have been won and the return on



equity at the investment bank of 12 per cent, while hardly better than its cost of capital, is at least moving in the right direction. Barclays is handing buckets of cash back to shareholders, arguably not what its management is paid to do but better than squandering it as in the past.

HSBC and Standard Chartered march to a different tune and both, in different ways are making a success of their overseas franchises. Standard cashed in on the currency turbulence in South-east Asia. HSBC continues to benefit from the booming economies of Asia and is

building up a meaningful franchise in Latin America.

The black sheep of the sector continues to be NatWest, although its plight appears to have been exaggerated by a press that has scented blood. Certainly its investment banking arm is still in trouble, returning just 2.4 per cent on its capital, but what NatWest appears to have got most wrong is to allow the perception of the bank as a loser to get such a firm grip. Its biggest error has been to allow itself to look weak when, all around, its rivals were looking stronger than perhaps they really are.

Saracen claims bid support

Clifford German

The letters of support for HSBC Asset Management in its bid to take over the running of the poorly performing Saracen Value Trust from SFM Investment Management were not watertight commitments, Mr Jim Fisher, the HSBC director on the Saracen board claimed last night. HSBC had not yet complied with his request to show him the letter.

Several of the shareholders had told him that they had also asked HSBC to pass a copy of the letter to the board of the trust. There may also be two or three different letters of commitment, added Mr Fisher.

The Saracen board will meet on Monday to consider several options for improving the performance of the trust, which specialises in "value investment" in small companies - which are currently deeply out of fashion.

SVT shares traded at a discount of 17-18 per cent to net asset value, although they gained 2p to 96.5p yesterday.

The HSBC proposal will be considered at Monday's meeting, but Mr Fisher ruled out any change of investment policy. He believed investment preferences could change back at any time in favour of small companies with potential for earnings growth.

informative:

First Direct Base Rate
With effect from 7 August 1997, First Direct Base Rate has been increased by 0.25% from 6.75% to 7.00% p.a.

HomeOwner Reserve
With effect from 7 August 1997, the HomeOwner Reserve interest rate has been increased by 0.25% to 13.25% p.a. (APR 13.8%)

First Direct is a division of Midland Bank plc Member HSBC Group

BASE RATE

With effect from 7 August 1997
The Royal Bank of Scotland
Base Rate has been increased from 6.75% to 7.00% per annum.

The Royal Bank of Scotland

The Royal Bank of Scotland plc.
Registered Office: 36 St. Andrew Square, Edinburgh EH2 2YE.
Registered in Scotland No. 90312.

STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low
FTSE 100	5088.80	+80.80	+1.2	5088.80	4956.60
FTSE 250	4588.20	+80.90	+1.8	4725.40	4386.20
FTSE 350	2432.30	+31.50	+1.3	2432.30	2017.90
FTSE SmallCap	2197.15	+8.38	+0.4	2374.20	2178.29
FTSE AP Share	2389.07	+29.33	+1.3	2389.07	1989.78
New York	8271.39	+12.08	+0.1	8259.31	5032.94
Tokyo	19475.85	-226.22	-1.1	20681.07	17303.85
Hong Kong	16673.27	+131.67	+0.8	16673.27	12055.17
Frankfurt	4414.35	+78.96	+1.8	4438.93	2848.77

INTEREST RATES					
Short sterling			UK medium gilt		
1 Month	3 Month	1 Year	1 Year	3 Year	5 Year
UK 8.88	7.44	6.99	7.75	7.02	7.86
US 5.58	5.94	6.21	6.49	6.48	6.74
Japan 0.47	0.59	2.12	3.22	-	-
Germany 3.06	3.50	5.69	6.27	6.40	-

CURRENCIES					
F/S			£/DM		
Yesterday	Day's change	Year Ago	Yesterday	Day's change	Year Ago
\$ (London)	1.5880	-1.51c	1.5420	0.6305	+0.59
\$ (NY)	1.5850	-1.53c	1.5430	0.6309	+0.79
¥ (London)	127.211	-3.01p	2.2889	118.733	-0.12p
¥ (London)	127.211	-3.01p	2.2889	118.733	-0.12p
£ (London)	102.8	-1.1	85.3	106.9	unch

OTHER INDICATORS					
Yesterday	Day's change	Year Ago	Index	Yr. change	Yr. Ago
Oil Brent \$	19.12	-0.38	19.79	157.5	+2.99c
Gold \$	321.40	+1.25	388.20	112.8	+3.40c
Gold £	202.85	+2.69	251.75	Base Rates	6.75pc

PHILIPS
ECOTONE

Pick your team to take you to the World Cup Finals

INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

THE INDEPENDENT

With the new league season now underway, a vast array of footballing talent is on parade for the first time. Arsenal and Chelsea have been the busiest clubs in the overseas market, with Marc Overmars the most expensive recruit. The two London clubs can be expected to mount a strong challenge. Liverpool and Newcastle United will also be fighting for the title. However, Alex Ferguson's men will again be the team to beat. With the signings of Teddy Sheringham and Celso Silva from Brazil they are again the bookmakers' favourites to win the title. Can you keep up with the changes? The Independent and Independent on Sunday are giving you the chance. With a budget of £40 million, can you come up with a team to top them all in the Premiership this season?

HOW TO ENTER.

Firstly you will need to pick your team formation, of course there's your goalkeeper plus you have a choice of four formations for the others in your team.

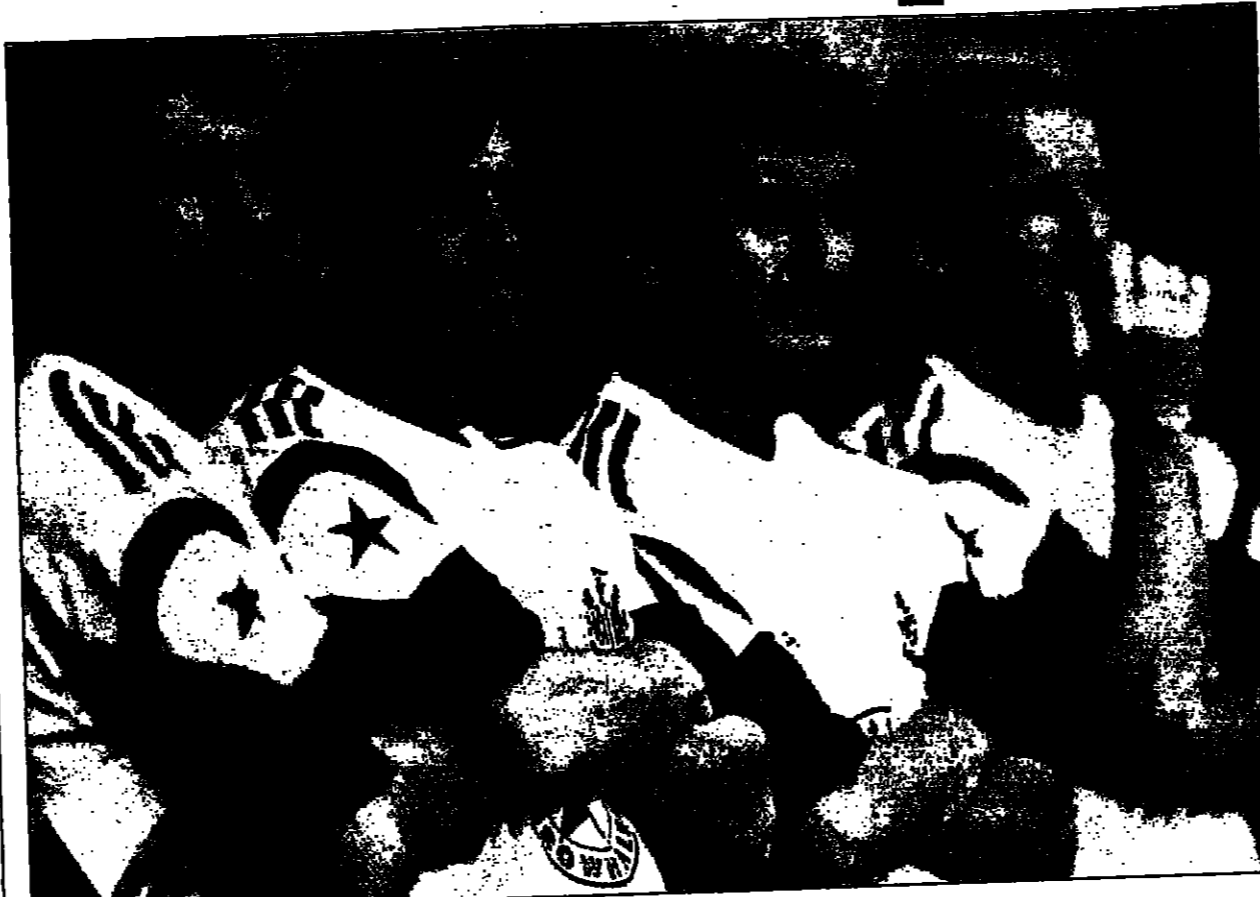
FORMATION A. 4-4-2
4 Defenders, 4 Midfielders, 2 Strikers

FORMATION B. 4-3-3
4 Defenders, 3 Midfielders, 3 Strikers

FORMATION C. 5-3-2
5 Defenders, 3 Midfielders, 2 Strikers

FORMATION D. 3-5-2
3 Defenders, 5 Midfielders, 2 Strikers

Once you have chosen your formation and team name pick your team of 11 players and 1 manager from the list below. Players can only play in the positions that they are listed under and their total value must not go over £40million. Having made a note of your team call our registration hotline. Please try to use a tone telephone - one which makes tone noises when you dial, although pulse telephones can be used to register your team.



THE ULTIMATE PRIZE

The overall winner, the manager who at the end of the season accrues more points than any other will win a trip to the 1998 World Cup in France. With a companion, they will see all the action of a quarter-final and semi-final of their choice, plus the final. In addition, the highest scoring team each month will win a pair of tickets to one of England's home internationals at Wembley.

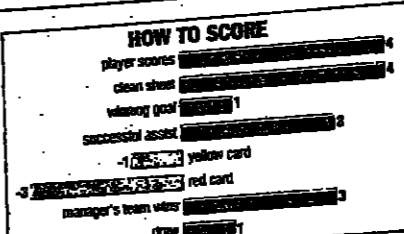
Register today, call:

UK 0930-525-260 (tone)

UK 0930-525-259 (pulse)

Republic of Ireland: 1550 131 659

UK calls cost 50p per minute at all times. Republic of Ireland (tone only) calls cost 50p per minute including VAT at all times. Minimum call length 6.5 minutes.



Every time one of your players score you get four points. There are four points for a keeper or a defender every time their team keeps a clean sheet. If a player scores the winning goal, i.e. if there is a one goal difference in the winning goal, the player scoring the final goal for the winning team is awarded 1 bonus point awarded in addition to standard goal related points. Each successful Assist, a pass judged by our experts to lead directly to a goal, will give a player 3 points. The opinion of our experts on the matter is final. Each player selected and starting a game will be awarded one point.

If a player is given a Yellow Card they lose 1 point, if a player is given a Red Card they lose 3 points. Own goals, either scored or conceded, do not count.

The Premiership Manager that you choose will be awarded 3 points if their real-life team wins, 1 point is awarded if they draw and no points are given if they lose.

If you would like to know more about Philips' range of lighting products please call 0181-606 1966

INDEPENDENT FANTASY FOOTBALL

CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	VALUE (£m)	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	VALUE (£m)	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	VALUE (£m)	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	VALUE (£m)
GOALKEEPERS				455	Cox	Bol	2.5	560	Lundekvam	Sou	1.2	679	Sharpe	Lee	3.5
300	Seaman	Ars	4.0	456	Elliot	Bol	3.0	561	Scalas	Tot	3.4	680	Ribeiro	Lee	1.5
303	Lukic	Ars	1.0	457	Fairclough	Bol	2.0	562	Campbell	Tot	4.0	683	Haaland	Lee	2.5
304	Manninger	Ars	3.0	458	Taggart	Bol	2.5	563	Calderwood	Tot	2.9	684	Parker	Lei	2.5
305	Bosnich	AV	1.5	459	Bergsson	Bol	1.5	564	Austin	Tot	2.2	685	Taylor	Lei	1.6
306	Oakes	AV	1.0	460	Duberry	Chel	3.0	565	Edinburgh	Tot	1.6	686	Izzett	Lei	3.2
307	Watson	Bar	1.0	461	Petrescu	Chel	3.0	566	Carr	Tot	1.2	687	Lennon	Lei	1.7
308	Lesse	Bar	5.2	462	Lambourde	Chel	3.0	567	Mabbutt	Tot	1.5	688	Guppy	Lei	3.0
309	Flowers	Bla	5.2	463	Leboeuf	Chel	5.0	568	Dicks	WH	2.7	689	Barnes	Liv	5.2
310	Filan	Bla	1.2	464	Sinclair	Chel	2.5	569	Rieper	WH	3.0	690	Redknapp	Liv	5.9
333	Brannagan	Bol	1.0	465	Daish	Cov	2.7	570	Halls	WH	1.5	693	McManaman	Liv	3.0
334	De Goeij	Chel	1.0	466	Shaw	Cov	2.2	571	Ford	WH	2.5	694	Thomas	Liv	4.0
335	Grodas	Chel	2.2	467	Burrows	Cov	2.2	572	Ferdinand	WH	2.2	695	Leonhardsen	Liv	7.4
336	Ogrizovic	Cov	1.0	468	Haworth	Cov	1.5	573	Impey	WH	2.0	696	Giggs	Man	7.0
337	Hedman	Cov	1.0	469	Edworthy	CP	1.5	574	Turner	WH	4.0	697	Bekham	Man	7.0
338	Nash	CP	1.0	470	Gordon	CP	2.0	575	Perry	Wim	1.5	698	Keane	Man	7.0
339	Day	CP	1.2	471	Muscat	CP	1.0	576	Cunningham	Wim	2.0	699	Butt	Man	3.5
340	Poom	Der	1.6	472	Tuttle	CP	2.0	580	Thatcher	Wim	1.5	700	Poborski	Man	3.6
341	Hoult	Der	3.0	473	Linighan	CP	2.0	581	Kimble	Wim	1.5	703	Lee	New	3.8
342	Southall	Eve	1.5	474	Roberts	CP	3.0	MIDFIELD				704	Batty	New	2.5
343	Gerrard	Eve	3.3	475	Hreidreisson	CP	1.0	600	Platt	Ars	2.5	705	Gillespie	New	2.0
344	Martyn	Lee	1.2	476	Stimac	Der	3.3	601	Parlour	Ars	2.4	706	Beardsley	New	2.0
345	Beeney	Lee	2.5	477	C Powell	Der	1.8	602	Vieira	Ars	4.5	707	Ketsbara	New	2.5
346	Keller	Lei	1.5	478	Laursen	Der	1.5	603	Overmars	Ars	6.0	708	Hyde	SW	1.8
347	Poole	Lei	3.5	479	Erano	Der	2.5	604	Rodriguez	Ars	2.0	709	Whittingham	SW	1.7
348	James	Liv	1.0	480	Short	Eve	1.9	605	Taylor	AV	1.9	730	Whittingham	SW	3.0
349	Warner	Liv	1.0	481	Watson	Eve	2.7	606	Johnson	AV	3.2	731	Carbone	Sou	2.4
350	Schmeichel	Man	5.5	482	Unsworth	Eve	3.0	607	Townsend	AV	4.1	732	Magilton	Sou	1.5
351	Van Der Gouw	Man	1.2	483	Hinchcliffe	Eve	3.5	608	Draper	AV	2.0	733	Slater	Sou	1.2
352	Given	New	2.5	484	Bilic	Eve	4.0	609	MacLellan	Bar	2.0	734	Oakley	Tot	6.0
353	Hilop	New	2.5	485	Kelly	Lee	3.6	610	Redfern	Bar	1.2	735	Anderton	Tot	3.5
354	Pressman	SW	3.0	486	Wetherall	Lee	2.5	611	Eaden	Bar	1.2	736	Fox	Tot	3.2
355	Taylor	Sou	1.0	487	Molenaar	Lee	2.5	612	Tinker	Bar	1.0	737	Howells	Tot	3.5
356	Beasant	Sou	3.4	488	Dorigo	Lee	1.2	613	Donis	Bla	3.0	738	Ginola	Tot	3.0
357	Walker	Tot	1.0	489	Robertson	Lee	2.5	614	Wilcox	Bla	3.0	739	Sinton	Tot	2.5
358	Bardsen	WH	1.5	490	Walsh	Lei	2.2	615	McKinlay	Bla	2.2	740	Nielsen	WH	2.0
359	Milkosko	Wim	2.7	491	Whitlow	Lei	1.2	616	Sherwood	Bla	3.4	741	Williamson	WH	2.0
360	Sullivan	Wim	2.7	492	Elliot	Lei	1.6	617	Flitcroft	Bla	3.0	742	Hughes	WH	2.5
DEFENDERS				493	Watts	Lei	3.0	618	Franssen	Bol	1.5	743	Bishop	WH	2.5
400	Dixon	Ars	2.5	494	Wright	Liv	3.0	619	Thompson	Bol	2.8	744	Lomas	WH	3.0
401	Upson	Ars	2.0	495	Ruddock	Liv	1.2	620	Pollock	Bol	1.2	745	Jones	Wim	2.8
402	Petit	Ars	4.2	496	Harkness	Liv	2.5	621	Sellars	Bol	1.5	746	Earle	Wim	3.1
403	Grimendi	Ars	2.7	497	Kvarme	Liv	2.5	622	Gullitt	Chel	4.4	747	Ardley	Wim	2.0
404	Winterburn	Ars	2.5	498	Bjornebye	Liv	3.0	623	Di Matteo	Chel	3.0	748	Fear	Wim	2.0
405	Bould	Ars	4.5	499	Matteo	Liv	3.0	624	Wise	Chel	2.4	749	Hughes	Wim	2.0
406	Adams	Ars	4.5	500	G Neville	Man	4.2	625	Newton	Chel	1.0	STRIKERS			
407	Kown	Ars	3.0	501	P Neville	Man	2.5	626	P Hughes	Chel	3.0	800	Bergkamp	Ars	7.5
408	Stanton	AV	5.2	502	Irwin	Man	3.0	627	Babeyaro	Cov	1.8	801	Wright	Ars	7.2
409	Southgate	AV	3.0	503	Pallister	Man	3.5	628	Telfer	Cov	2.4	802	Boamorte Per	Ars	2.0
410	Ehiojo	AV	3.0	504	Johnsen	Man	3.5	629	Richardson	Cov	3.0	803	Yorke	AV	6.7
411	Nelson	AV	1.2	505	Salako	Cov	2.4	630	McAllister	Cov	2.0	804	Joachim	AV	2.4
412	Wright	AV	3.0	506	Silva	Cov	2.0	631	Salako	Cov	2.0	805	Collimore	AV	8.1
413	Scimeca	AV	2.2	507	Albert	New	3.7	632	Johansen	Der	1.2	806	Wilkinson	Bar	1.2
414	Grayson	AV	2.2	508	Howey	New	3.0	633	Simpson	Der	3.0	807	Hendrie	Bar	1.5
415	Moses	Bar	1.5	509	Peacock	New	3.3	634	Manovic	Der	1.2	808	Hristov	Bla	4.5
416	Appleby	Bar	2.0	510	Barton	New	2.2	635	Van Der Laan	Der	1.6	809	Sutton	Bla	3.0
417	Thompson	Bar	1.0	511	Beresford	SW	2.2	636	Daily	Der	1.2	810	Gallagher	Bla	4.0
418	Krizan	Bar	3.4	512	Blondeau	SW	1.9	637	Farrelly	Eve	2.2	811	McGinlay	Bol	2.2
419	Berg	Bla	5.0	513	Hunt	SW	1.9	638	Grant	Eve	1.8	812	Blake	Bol	2.7
420	Le Saux	Bla	3.0	514	Atherton	SW	2.5	639	Stuart	Eve	2.5	813	Zola	Chel	9.0
421	Coleman	Bla	4.4	515	Walker	SW	1.6	640	Speed	Eve	2.0	814	Vialli	Chel	3.5
422	Hendry	Bla	4.4	516	Stefanovic	SW	1.7	641	Bowyer	Lee	3.0	815	M Hughes	Chel	4.4
423	Kenna	Bla	1.9	517	Newsome	SW	1.5	642	Wallace	Lee	1.8	816	Tore Andre Flo	Cov	3.0
424	Henchon	Bla	2.0	518	Monkou	Sou	2.5	MANAGERS				900	Wenger	Ars	7.5
425	Valery	Bla	3.0	519	Dodd	Sou	1.5	901	Little	AV	5.0	902	Wilson	Bar	2.0
426	Anderson	Bla	2.5	520	Benali	Sou	1.5	903	Hodgson	Bla	5.0	904	Todd	Bol	2.5
427	Anderson	Bla	2.5	521	Van Gobel	Sou	1.5	905	Gullitt	Chel	4.5	906	Gullitt	Chel	4.5

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Only entries made on the Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football official website will be valid.
2. For your Fantasy Football team selection you may only use the players published in the official list in the Independent/Independent on Sunday.
3. Entries must consist of 11 players and 1 manager.
4. The players must be of a certain age and must not have been suspended from the game at the time of selection. The total cost of the team, including the manager, must not exceed £40 million.
5. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
6. In the event that a goalkeeper or a defender is substituted, the player substituted will be substituted for the player who was substituted in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
7. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
8. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
9. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
10. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.

4. FA Fantasy Football

1. Only entries made on the Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football official website will be valid.
2. For your Fantasy Football team selection you may only use the players published in the official list in the Independent/Independent on Sunday.
3. Entries must consist of 11 players and 1 manager.
4. The players must be of a certain age and must not have been suspended from the game at the time of selection. The total cost of the team, including the manager, must not exceed £40 million.
5. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
6. In the event that a goalkeeper or a defender is substituted, the player substituted will be substituted for the player who was substituted in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
7. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
8. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
9. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
10. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.

5. Independent Fantasy Football

1. Only entries made on the Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football official website will be valid.
2. For your Fantasy Football team selection you may only use the players published in the official list in the Independent/Independent on Sunday.
3. Entries must consist of 11 players and 1 manager.
4. The players must be of a certain age and must not have been suspended from the game at the time of selection. The total cost of the team, including the manager, must not exceed £40 million.
5. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
6. In the event that a goalkeeper or a defender is substituted, the player substituted will be substituted for the player who was substituted in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
7. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
8. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
9. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
10. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.

6. Independent Fantasy Football

1. Only entries made on the Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football official website will be valid.
2. For your Fantasy Football team selection you may only use the players published in the official list in the Independent/Independent on Sunday.
3. Entries must consist of 11 players and 1 manager.
4. The players must be of a certain age and must not have been suspended from the game at the time of selection. The total cost of the team, including the manager, must not exceed £40 million.
5. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
6. In the event that a goalkeeper or a defender is substituted, the player substituted will be substituted for the player who was substituted in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
7. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
8. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
9. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
10. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.

7. Independent Fantasy Football

1. Only entries made on the Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football official website will be valid.
2. For your Fantasy Football team selection you may only use the players published in the official list in the Independent/Independent on Sunday.
3. Entries must consist of 11 players and 1 manager.
4. The players must be of a certain age and must not have been suspended from the game at the time of selection. The total cost of the team, including the manager, must not exceed £40 million.
5. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
6. In the event that a goalkeeper or a defender is substituted, the player substituted will be substituted for the player who was substituted in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
7. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
8. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
9. The Independent/Independent on Sunday Fantasy Football game is a game of chance. There is no skill involved in the game. Therefore, there is no prize pool.
10. The Independent

England find belated streak of defiance Kent delayed by Prichard

Jon Culley says
Atherton's men have
taken a leaf out
of their rivals' book

Just when it seemed they had surrendered all hope of prising the Ashes from Australia's grasp, England conspired in a display of splendid defiance in the Nottingham sunshine. Undetermined though it was by Shane Warne's guile in the final session, it had made uplifting watching for a 13,500 crowd who had fully expected to see Australia bat the home side out of the match and out of the hunt.

Realists and cynics might argue that it came a day too late, that seven wickets for 116 is all well and good but of somewhat less merit when it follows 311 for 3, as Australia had been when Andrew Caddick struck the first blow of the morning.

Despite England's fightback, Australia still amassed a total of consequence, gathering runs at Thursday's 100-per-session pace regardless of the falling wickets.

But one should not carp too much. England, who could have been forgiven willing spirits after an opening day of heavy punishment and scant good fortune, now revealed the kind of character, for which Australia's renowned resolve is the model, that the David Lloyd regime have been trying to ingrain upon England's nature.

Alec Stewart's extraordinary performance quite rightly dominates the thoughts. The longer Australia batted, the deeper be-



Alec Stewart watches and waits as Australia's Shane Warne bowls to Mike Atherton at Trent Bridge yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

came the worry that the 34-year-old wicketkeeper-batsman would not have the stamina to open the innings after almost a day and a half behind the stumps in the wily heat.

Not only did Stewart defy the doubts, however, he gave the England innings the start it required to maintain the momentum set up by their bowlers. Attacking the Australian bowling, not least Warne, with a gusto that thrilled the home contingent, he deserved to see

his boldness bring him a first century against Australia. To dominate Warne requires a batsman to score regularly and heavily, forcing him to change his line of attack and to rethink his fields. Stewart clearly came armed with this strategy, much as he might have preferred a less demanding approach.

He was set for one of the more impressive hundreds of the summer when, to his and the crowd's profound disappointment, he finally, fatally, allowed

himself one liberty too many. If Stewart can reflect with some satisfaction on the day, then so should England's pace bowling spearhead, Dean Headley, Devon Malcolm and Andrew Caddick bowled not only with great heart but much skill to restrict Australia to a total two thirds of what had been expected.

With attention fixed on the debut-making Holloake brothers, it was easy to forget that Headley is making only his

third Test appearance. Yet the Kent man bowled yesterday in the manner of one well established at this level, his figures satisfying David Lloyd's demand for accuracy as well as wickets.

For his part, Caddick was at times inspired and deserving of better luck while Malcolm, who had greeted his recall with some barbed comments about the capriciousness of the selectors, kept his promise to prove a point with a fiery spell that, at its height, yielded the

wickets of Ian Healy, Warne and, critically, Steve Waugh in the space of 20 deliveries, exposing the Australian tail for Headley to complete the job.

Against Warne, a formidable weapon even on a wicket as inherently good as this one, England will need to play exceptionally well today to deny their opponents a substantial advantage. But they should at least avoid the humbling that seemed their most predictable fate at Thursday's close.

JOHN COLLIS
reports from Canterbury
Kent 525-9 dec.
Essex 156 and 277-5

Were it not for a doughty captain's innings by the limping Paul Prichard, Essex might well have been rolled over inside three days here, leaving the sun scorched Canterbury Festival with a blank Saturday. As it is a healthy number of Kent supporters will roll up today, expecting to celebrate victory at a crucial stage of the season, with their team in good heart to sustain a title challenge.

Kent's domination of the match was confirmed when, on Thursday evening, Martin McCague bowled a terrifying four-wicket spell in support of his side's mountain of runs. The only significant partnership of the Essex first innings then began, between the cautious Paul Grayson - a former opener now charged with shepherding a fragile tail - and Ronnie Irani, who has been somewhat reckless early in his innings.

Yesterday morning, they stiffened Essex's sinews by batting confidently and in face-saving mode for more than an hour. There followed a remarkable collapse, even for a weary team. Paul Strang provoked it when persuaded Grayson to balloon a ball from the brisk Julian Thompson in the direction of

extra cover, where the Zimbabwean secured a diving catch at ground level. After three overs, four more wickets and three further runs, Essex were following on.

Although Prichard is now in his third year as the Essex captain, by his high standards he has had a comparatively modest time with the bat since taking a double century from Sussex in August 1993. But when Graham Gooch made his sudden departure from the county game, he opened the throttle, making 120 in the old man's farewell match and now improving on that.

He is a phlegmatic, unfussy player capable of sudden bursts of unpremeditated violence. Yesterday he pulled a hamstring on 69, calling for Darren Robinson as his runner, and continued to perform while remaining almost immobile in the crease. And yet the sequence of six scoring strokes that took him past 100 were all fours, carved to every corner. Essex members would have liked similar muscular resistance from the Stuart Law, but the Australian faced only nine balls in the match. Once more it was Grayson who extended the fight, studiously protecting his end until caught on the hop by Alan Ealham, and Danny Law continued the rearguard action. Essex ended the day 92 runs away from asking Kent to bat again.

Young steps up rate

DAVID LLEWELLYN
reports from Taunton
Gloucestershire 350-8 dec
Somerset 191-3

While they may nudge each other geographically, Gloucestershire and Somerset have looked to be poles apart in thinking during this game. The disagreement over which pitch should have been used is nothing compared with the respective approaches of contriving a possible finish to the game.

Gloucestershire displayed a certain degree of urgency on the way to maximum batting points. In-form Shaun Young cracked an entertaining 79-ball 83, which made his partner and captain Mark Alleyne look pedestrian on the way to his 70 off 123 deliveries.

Young is going to pose a tricky problem for Gloucestershire. Not only is he scoring plenty of runs, but he has also taken 29 Championship wickets. The Tasmanian wants to return to the county next season, but so does the West Indies captain Courtney Walsh, who is due a testimonial by Gloucestershire next season.

The Gloucestershire hearts were not really focused on rapid runs, their minds appearing set on the compromise of 11 points, which would at least restore them to the head

of the Championship, albeit only by a point.

Without contrivance, however, there is little chance of conjuring a positive result; and there is no chance of the two captains conferring and coming to a mutual compromise, not after Thursday's shenanigans when feelings ran high during the pitch battle. The object of their disagreement turned in a disappointing performance as well, the pitch's lifelessness contributing to the negative turn of events.

Gloucestershire in any case were forced to spend too long over the residue of their first innings, and there was almost as much time lost fetching the ball from the boundary (a task for both sides) on a day of less-than-distinguished bowling.

Somerset, however, did begin well, Simon Ecclestone knocking off 30 in just 17 balls. Their captain Peter Bowler found the boundary as easily as Young had earlier in the day to reach a half-century - his first in the Championship for two months.

Together with Mark Lathwell, who is just rediscovering his touch, Bowler shared in a century partnership for the third wicket. Lathwell was markedly quicker in reaching his half-century - 82 balls and seven boundaries confirming his timing and choice of shot. He pulled imperiously and drove unstoppably - all in unpeppery hot and humid conditions.

Malcolm sharpens his performance in the field

HENRY BLOFIELD

What a difference it makes if all the catches are held. The only blemish in Australia's long first innings was a fendish difficult leg-side stumping chance given by Mark Waugh off Adam Holloake. Nothing destroys bowlers' confidence more than missed chances.

Right through that disheartening first day, England's fielding was as good as it has been

at any time in the series. Countless runs were saved and even Devon Malcolm, who is somewhat less than a dynamic athlete, was keeping the batsmen to singles at third man where at other times they would have been able to take two. It must be accepted that there will never be 11 Nasser Hussains in the same side. There will be a gazelle or two, just as there will almost certainly be the odd donkey. But donkeys can teach themselves to become reliable

fielders by practice and application.

Concentration is all-important just as it is with batting and bowling. A bowler who has just had 20 runs taken off an over must not shuffle off to third man and allow himself to be immersed in gloom for the next six balls. If that happens, a quick to third man will almost certainly result in easy runs.

Geoffrey Boycott was not a naturally athletic mover but by hard work and application

he turned himself into a highly competent fielder in the outfield and the middle distances. He also developed a good, accurate throw. In the pressure-cooker atmosphere of contemporary international cricket, the more sluggish fielders should make every effort to imitate Boycott.

The wicketkeeper also plays a most important role as the centre of the fielding cog. By coming away from the stumps to take a poor throw on the full

toss makes the fielder's effort look better. It was, seeing the wicketkeeper set the example, as Alec Stewart did so splendidly in Australia's innings, is an inspiration to the fielders.

The loss of the toss at Trent Bridge was a body-blow for England, and it was greatly to captain Mike Atherton and Stewart's credit that they never allowed the others to lose heart. They prevented Australia's batsmen from taking complete control on Thursday

and then they enabled the bowlers to take full advantage of more helpful conditions on the second day.

It was clear that a lot of hard work had gone into the fielding. Often this seems to be a department of the game in which England come second to the opposition, be it Australia or whoever. The lesson of Trent Bridge is that top-class fielding makes the bowling seem that much sharper. It is such good propaganda.

Flintoff shines after Zimbabwe's false dawn

MIKE CAREY
reports from Edgbaston

The hazards of playing cricket in Birmingham's sub-tropical heat were probably not on the agenda when the young men of Zimbabwe were briefed on the do's and don'ts of touring. So their bowlers had to learn first hand yesterday on the second day of the NatWest Under-19 Test that there was no hiding place on the flattest of pitches.

One of the day's little ironies was that they took a wicket with the first ball of the morning and another four overs later, but it was the falsest of dawns; England scored 217 runs before lunch and another 180 in the afternoon session.

At the heart of it all was an innings of 116 by Andrew Flintoff, England's captain, which, even allowing for the shortcomings of some of the bowling and the nearness of one boundary (this pitch is on the edge of Edgbaston's large

square) was wonderful to behold.

It seems heresy to say in the current cricket climate that Flintoff looks a more complete batsman than some of the more publicised recent members of this side. He knows the whereabouts of his off-stump, defends with a exemplary straightness and picks off errors of line and length with withering power and certainty.

From the moment he drove Muleki Nkala smoothly to the long-off boundary to get off the

mark, the bowling was dismissed to all parts, mostly off the middle of his bat, and he made a century before lunch from only 75 balls, with 12 fours and five sixes, the latter usually with effortless pull-drives.

He made his second 50 from a mere 29 deliveries and it was looking a shade too simple for him when he went after a very short, very wide ball from the persevering Aubrey Stein, who bowled 22 overs unchanged either side of lunch, and was caught in the gully.

Flintoff will clearly warm the hearts of Lancastrians (and there are one or two that need warming) for years to come. It was gratifying to see the Zimbabwe youngsters applaud him. Their bowlers had learned a lot about the merits of length and line.

Their day had started more encouragingly when Stephen Peters was caught at short leg off Stein's first ball. Stein also had Giles Haywood picked up in the gully, but afterwards the tourists struggled to find a

combination of bowlers who could give them an element of control against the vigorous stroke play of England's middle order. Even their spinners could not do it.

After their problems in the heat it was no surprise that Zimbabwe looked vulnerable against Ryan Sidebottom and Alex Tudor with the new ball. They were swiftly reduced to 43 for 4 and must pray for a miracle (or perhaps a sub tropical storm) to get them out of this mess.

Sheridan in doubt for Leeds

Rugby League
DAVE HADFIELD

Leeds will be without their regular scrum-half, Ryan Sheridan, for the match at Bradford tomorrow night that could keep their mathematical chance of winning the Stanes Super League title alive for another week.

Sheridan damaged ankle ligaments in the defeat by North Queensland last week and his coach, Dean Bell, is delaying a decision on who will replace him until the eve of the match.

Graham Holroyd could switch to play scrum-half, while both Dean Lawford and Gavin Brown are on stand-by.

Bell must also decide whether to risk Richie Blackmore, the New Zealand international centre who has been out for two months with a similar, but more serious injury. Blackmore has trained fully for the first time this week and the

temptation to use a player of his strike-power, for at least part of the match, will be strong.

"It is only a matter of time before Bradford sew up the title and we just have to try and ensure that they don't do it against us," Bell said. "We know that we have come up short in the previous games between the sides, so there is a lot of local pride at stake."

Bradford have to check the fitness of James Lowe, Paul Anderson, Jon Scates and - almost inevitably - Robbie Paul before Matthew Elliott can finalise his side.

Oldham, badly needing a victory to prevent them becoming add-on at the foot of the table, are at St Helens, who are without Vila Matuati and Steve Prescott with injuries picked up in the World Club Championship in Australia.

Saints have "had a word" with the group of players who adopted dyed blond hair for the trip, attracting criticism - especial-

ly when they were losing heavily - that they were not taking it seriously. "You only do that sort of thing at the end of the season or when you are right on top of your game," the club's chief executive, David Howes, said. "It was a bit of misplaced bonding."

Paris, one of the clubs Oldham could hope to catch, play Halifax in the southern French town of Narbonne today - after which they will travel to England for their WCC play-off against Saints on Wednesday. Warrington will have Salei Finau back from suspension against Salford, while Andrew Duncan plays the last match of his loan period with the club before returning to London Broncos.

Castleford have ended any uncertainty about the future of their teenage scrum-half or hooker, Danny Orr, by improving an extending his contract, which will now run until 2000. Orr had been a target for the Australian club, Perth Reds.

Glasgow aims for Super League

Glasgow Celtic's rugby league development officer, Graeme Thompson, believes a European Super League club in the city would provide the catalyst the sport needs in Scotland.

An Australian club, Hunter Mariners, have conducted a feasibility study into setting up a Glasgow franchise and Thompson feels there would be a massive potential audience.

The Mariners' Glasgow side would play at Firhill, Patrick Thistle's football ground, and hope to be up and running by 1999 - a prospect which clearly excites Thompson.

He said yesterday: "It has always been a target, now it is

looking a realistic one after the success of the recent Scotland internationals.

"I think there is a big audience for the sport. Even though Edinburgh is the home of rugby union, league has its own appeal."

"With it being played in the summer, it could attract football fans along and even those who don't follow it now would soon pick up the rules."

"If Super League is to be truly European it needs to leave the M62 corridor and I'm sure Glasgow could tempt players easily enough. For some, it would be a dream come true to play up here."

"I do a lot of work in schools and there are already a lot of youngsters playing the game, but they need something to aim for and heroes to look up to, which Super League would provide."

Bob Ferris, the Mariners' chief executive, said: "We have offered our services to the people who are driving it and we are waiting to hear how we can proceed."

Maurice Lindsay, the chief executive of the Rugby Football League, said: "We are always keen on the spread of Super League and we would be pleased to hear from anybody interested in getting rugby league going in Glasgow."

CRICKET SCOREBOARD

BRITANNIA ASSURANCE County Championship Third day of four, 11.0 today	Hampshire - First innings (Overnight: 69 for 2) S J White c Smith b Duff 62 R J Boucher c Gurney b Lewis 27 A Smith b Nettle 27 M Letcher not out 18 P J Sheehan not out 18 Total (40.0 overs): 188	Surrey - First innings (Overnight: 120 for 6) R M Watson c Smith b Lewis 23 R M Watson c Smith b Lewis 23 M J Bates c Lewis b M Letcher 12 M J Bates c Lewis b M Letcher 12 M J Bates c Lewis b M Letcher 12 Total (40.0 overs): 136
Kent - First innings (Overnight: 50 for 8) R C Gurney c Smith b Duff 50 A Smith b Nettle 27 M Letcher not out 18 P J Sheehan not out 18 Total (40.0 overs): 188	Northants v Worcestershire Northants: 145-4 (30.0 overs); Worcestershire: 110-7 (30.0 overs)	Sussex v Lancashire Sussex: 145-4 (30.0 overs); Lancashire: 110-7 (30.0 overs)
Essex - First innings (Overnight: 156 for 5) S J White c Smith b Duff 62 R J Boucher c Gurney b Lewis 27 A Smith b Nettle 27 M Letcher not out 18 P J Sheehan not out 18 Total (40.0 overs): 188	Gloucestershire - First innings (Overnight: 350 for 8) S J White c Smith b Duff 62 R J Boucher c Gurney b Lewis 27 A Smith b Nettle 27 M Letcher not out 18 P J Sheehan not out 18 Total (40.0 overs): 188	Under-19 Test Match England v Zimbabwe England: 145-4 (30.0 overs); Zimbabwe: 110-7 (30.0 overs)

Woods wades in to save Lancashire

ROUND-UP

Nathan Wood rescued Lancashire against Warwickshire at Blackpool yesterday. Needing 88 to wrap up their fourth championship win in five games, Lancashire hit trouble at 45 for 24 from 24 overs, after Warwickshire's Graeme Welch had accounted for five of their batsmen.

But Wood, the 22-year-old son of former Lancashire and England opener Barry, held Lancashire together before Warren Hegg and Gary Yates saw them through to a three-wicket win.

Wood's painstaking run-outs lasted two-and-three-quarter hours and he faced 112 balls for his 26 runs to shore up one end. He was dismissed by Doug Brown with the score on 67, but Hegg and Yates made sure there would be no more mistakes. Hegg scored 16 from 52 balls, and Yates 14 from seven balls, and his third four took Lancashire past the target. Then win took them into joint fifth place in the table, level with Warwickshire and Yorkshire.

THE INDEPENDENT
LIVE COMMENTARY
0891 881 485
COUNTY
ROUND UP
0891 525 075
Call our live commentary line on 0891 881 485. A product of THE IFC.

Youthful Rose ready to blossom

A Briton will become the youngest golfer in Walker Cup history today. **Andy Farrell**, in New York, found him in confident mood

Youth being the flavour of the sporting moment, Great Britain and Ireland set about their defence of the Walker Cup with the youngest player ever to compete in the biennial transatlantic competition. Justin Rose is today 10 days past his 17th birthday but the does not stop him being a key member of a side which also contains the 44-year-old Open silver medal winner Barclay Howard.

Rose is younger than Ronan Rafferty, Peter Baker and the American Roland MacKenzie, who were also 17 when they played in the two-day amateur version of the Ryder Cup. Tall and strong, but also mature beyond his years, Rose, who left school last year with eight GCSEs, has been groomed for his occasion almost like Tiger Woods.

Photographic evidence exists of Rose, who was born in South Africa of English parents, using plastic clubs and balls at 11 months. He does not remember, but he does recall breaking 70 for nine holes for the first time. He was five. "Dad would give me little targets," Rose said, "and would give me a train set or something if when I did them."

In this, his first summer as a full-time amateur, Rose won the St Andrews Links Trophy. "At the start of the season I felt it was unrealistic to make the Walker Cup, but it was what I wanted to achieve. All the tournaments I played were mapped out to try to get into the team."

His selection became inevitable. Peter McEvoy, the former British Amateur champion who played against Sandy Lyle and Nick Faldo before they turned pro, says Rose is better than either of those two at his age.

"His maturity is what strikes you," said Gary Wolstenholme, who played foursomes with Rose in an England international against Spain earlier this year.

"You think he's 22 or 23. Technically, he has an extremely good swing."

Wolstenholme, famously, beat Tiger Woods as Great Britain and Ireland regained the Cup at Royal Porthcawl two years ago. But overall, America lead the series 30 to four, with one tie. On home soil the Americans have only lost once, at Peachtree in 1989, and four years ago, led by the new Open champion Jason Leonard, delivered a thundering 19-5 thrashing at Interlachen.

Where the visitors are better off this time is in having had four of their number - Steven Young, David Park, Richard Coughlan and Keith Nolan - play American college golf. This is Rose's first experience over here and Quaker Ridge offers a typical US Open set-up with the thick rough around the greens to be avoided.

"This is my favourite type of golf," Rose said. "I prefer target golf to links golf. No doubt I'll be nervous, but I don't think there's any extra pressure on me being the youngest. If you're playing well you can cope with anything."

While the Americans are led by Steve Scott, 19, the runner-up to Woods when he won a third US Amateur last year, and 45-year-old John Harris, Great Britain and Ireland also have a range of youth and experience. Up to five of the team may turn pro after the match - Rose will probably stay on for one more match - but there are also career amateurs in the form of Amateur champion Craig Watson, 31, Graham Rankin, also 31, Wolstenholme, 36, and Howard.

The reformed alcoholic was the only amateur to play all four rounds at Royal Troon and has decided to retire after playing for Scotland in the Home Internationals next month. "It's time to go," he said. "I want to go out on a high and there's no way you can top all this."

Teams, Digest, page 24



Young swinger: Justin Rose practises on the sixth hole at Quaker Ridge Golf Club yesterday

Photograph: Allsport

Swede misses out on record

Patrik Sjoland narrowly missed birdie puts on the last two holes to lose a chance of becoming the first European Tour player to break 60 in a full event, in the second round of the Czech Open near Prague yesterday.

The Swede's 10-under-par 61 sliced three strokes off the Karlstein course record and earned him a share of the lead with Spain's Ryder Cup prospect, Ignacio Garrido, and another Spaniard, Miguel Jimenez.

Early evening thunderstorms halted proceedings with 36 players left to complete their second rounds this morning. The first-round leader, Britain's Scott Henderson, was nine under par, two shots off the lead, with three holes left when play stopped.

Sjoland was a stroke off the European Tour record for 18 holes as he joined Garrido and Jimenez on 11-under-par 131, two strokes ahead of the field. The Swede also equalled the best score of the year, by Britain's Jamie Spence at the Cannes Open, as he picked up 10 birdies by the time he came to the eighth, his 17th hole.

Needing two more birdies for the first 59, a putt of 18 feet spun out of the cup on the eighth and he just missed the hole at the ninth, his last, from 15 feet.

Sjoland had switched to an old putter and needed only 25 putts in his round. "I started thinking about the record after I birdied the fourth, my 13th hole," said Sjoland, who led last year's Italian Open with five holes left but finished second. "But when I lipped out on the eighth I knew it wasn't to be."

Garrido continued his challenge for a Ryder Cup place with a 65, while Jimenez posted 64. Another Swede, Daniel Chopra, is in the clubhouse on 133 after a 63.

Garrido, 10th in the Cup table in his race for a place on Seve Ballesteros's team against the United States next month, can clinch his Cup place three weeks before the qualifying deadline, but Italy's Costantino Rocca, ninth, is almost certain to miss the cut here by a stroke. He could also be passed by in the table by Ireland's Padraig Harrington, who is six off the lead after a 68.

Kelleher guides Irish into play-offs

Hockey

BILL COLWILL
reports from Harare

Sara Kelleher guided Ireland to an unexpected 3-2 win against Japan in the World Cup qualifying tournament here yesterday, with the victory earning her team a place in tomorrow's fifth-to-eighth play-offs.

Ireland, who had just one point from their labours here before yesterday's encounter, had to win against the Japanese to keep alive any hopes of making next year's finals in the Netherlands. They started badly, hitting in two goals in the opening 14 minutes and looking ragged.

Towards the end of the first half they won a string of penalty corners but were unable to breach the Japanese defences, with Japan's goalkeeper Nima Miyazaki quite outstanding in covering her line.

Kelleher, who had turned in moderate efforts at the tournament until this game, led Ireland's recovery eight minutes into the second half with a strong run down the right. The Slough midfielder found Lynsey McVicker inside to strike the first blow into the back of the net.

Spurred on by a large band of supporters, the Irish again drove forward, though their endeavours received a setback with the temporary suspension of Mary Logue. Reduced to 10 players, they forced a penalty corner in the 43rd minute and Arlene Thompson scored the equaliser.

At a penalty corner with just seven minutes remaining, the ball was switched by Thompson to Kelleher, who drove in the winning goal. There was still time for Japan's captain Sahori Miyazaki to hit the crossbar at the other end, but the Irish survived.

Their coach Terry Gregg was ecstatic. "You can't believe what this result means to me," he said. WOMEN'S WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS A standings: 1 South Africa (5), 2 Poland (4), 3 England (5), 4 Ireland (3), 5 Japan (2), 6 Canada (5), 7 Pool B: Spain 4 Zimbabwe 0.

Darragh's clear win

Equestrianism

RENEEVE MURPHY
reports from Dublin

Paul Darragh jumped two clear rounds on the mare Scandal to lead Ireland to success in the Nations Cup at the Kerrygold Dublin Horse Show yesterday while Britain, the joint leaders after the first round, trailed into fifth place.

Ireland, who received the Aga Khan Trophy from their president, Mary Robinson, claimed the victory without Eddie Macken having to jump a single fence. Like Ireland, Britain had three clear circuits in the first round, from Nick Skelton on Virtual Village Showtime, Geoff Billington on It's Otto and Robert Smith on Senator Tess Hansauer, with John Whitaker thus not required to jump Grannusch in the first round.

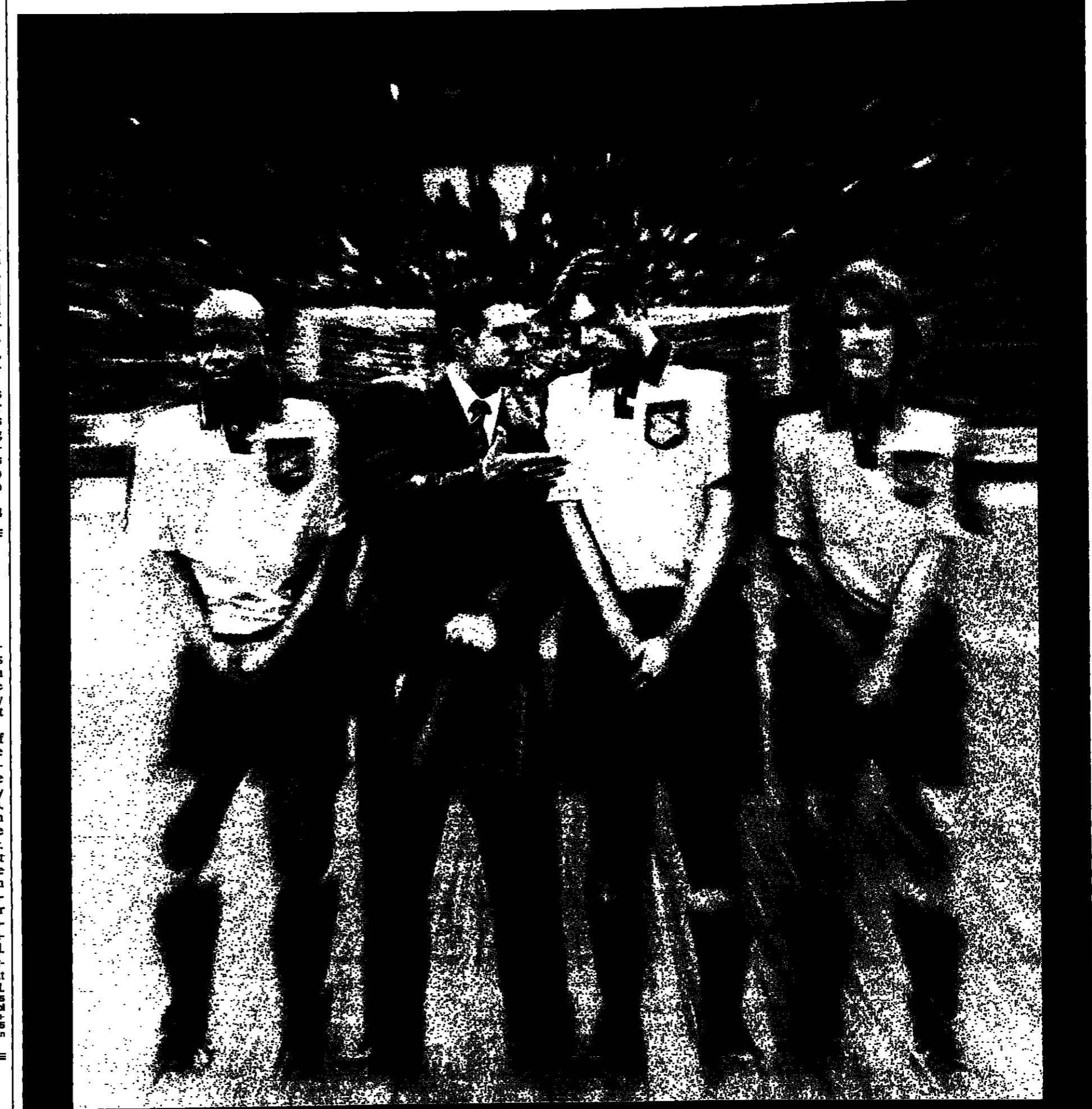
But drama followed, with the elimination of Billington, who was the best of the British contingent when sixth at last year's Olympic Games in Atlanta. His problems began at the fourth fence, a treble, where It's Otto refused at the final element and sent poles flying in all directions. It took five minutes for the fence to be rebuilt.

Billington's day went from bad to worse when he fell from the horse after the final fence. The judges decreed that he had fallen before going through the finish, and therefore was eliminated. After Showtime and Hansauer had made single errors, Whitaker could have retrieved the situation with a clear round on Grannusch, forcing a jump-off with Ireland - but he dropped two fences to leave the team in fifth.

The Netherlands moved up from fifth to be runners-up after three faultless second rounds. Eric van der Vleuten was the only Dutchman to emulate Darragh's performance of two clear circuits.

Van der Vleuten's teammates Jan Tops, on Operette la Silla, and Piet Raymakers, partnering the leading horse in the 1992 Olympics, Jewel's Classic Touch, were faultless at their second attempts.

Results, Digest, page 27



Our Mortgage Adviser will talk to you
wherever and whenever you want.

Ready to kick off your home buying plans? Then aim no further than NatWest if you're looking to tackle a mortgage. Not only can you rely on our highly trained team for expert advice, we'll also chat about your mortgage tactics wherever and whenever is convenient for you. What's more, with a wide range of mortgages to choose from, one's sure to kit you out. And with loyal support every step of the way, a packed trophy room and a team of outstanding players, you'll be on the winning side if you pick NatWest. Pop into your local branch and we'll arrange a fixture wherever and whenever you want.



NatWest
More than just a bank



You'll find us on the Internet on <http://www.natwest.co.uk/mortgage>

YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT.

Credit is available to persons aged 18 or over and is subject to status and conditions. Mortgage loans are available from National Westminster Home Loans Limited. Security and insurance are required. Written quotations are available from National Westminster Bank Plc, 41 Lombard, London EC2P 2DP. National Westminster Bank Plc represents only the NatWest and Gateway Marketing Group for life assurance, pensions, unit trusts, other regulated collective investments and investment services. All members of the Marketing Group are regulated by the Financial Services Authority and are authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority. The "Best High Street Bank" Award was issued by "The Mortgage" magazine and was judged which is only regulated by the Financial Services Authority for investment business and NatWest Stockbrokers Limited, which is a member of the London Stock Exchange and is regulated by the Securities and Futures Authority. The "Best High Street Bank" Award for the most competitive interest rates over a two year period was based on performance tables compiled by Mortgage Link. Mortgages available in England, Scotland and Wales only. Ref. No. 12063

sport

FOOTBALL KICKS-OFF

Overmars to provide cutting edge

THE WELL-KNOWN IMPORT

Glenn Moore talks to the Dutch speedster who prefers to live life in the slow lane

From Iceland's Bjarni Gudjonsson to Macedonia's Georgi Hristov, the foreign players have flown in this summer leaving fans scratching their heads and wondering whether their manager has bought a canthorse or a diamond. Arsenal, it appears, may have bought both in one deal.

Their main signing, the most enticing of the summer, is Marc Overmars, a £6m recruit from Ajax. His pedigree is impressive – he is a European Cup winner and World Cup quarter-finalist – and his past uncommon.

Overmars, who makes his Arsenal debut at Leeds United today, grew up on a family farm. It was a small-holding which had made little investment in mechanisation. Thus, come time for the potato harvest, Overmars would yoke himself with a rope and haul along a cart while, behind him, other family members pulled out the crop. This, he thinks, may have contributed to his renowned pace.

As muscle-building tales go, it is up there with the claim that Dickie Bird prepared for a season's umpiring by standing for hours with bags of sugar attached to his legs and that Anthony Nesty, Surinam's first Olympic swimming champion, gained his speed in shark-infested waters. This one, however, appears to be at least partially true.

"I grew up on a farm," said Overmars when we met this week. "I used to help my grandfather who had no machines, no tractors. Each year when we harvested potatoes we had to do it with a rope from the front and few men standing on a platform. We would pull them along while they pulled up potatoes. They told me: 'This is good for you Marc'. Every year they would phone me and say: 'It is harvest time'. His grandfather, incidentally, still lives on the farm. He is, said Overmars with noticeable pride, 94 years old.

Overmars also attributes his pace to his mother – "she was quick but, being a farmer, had no time for sports" – and some weight-training he did as a small, slightly built teenager.

In those days, he was a junior with



Marc Overmars will probably play in three positions this season – left and right wing and, if necessary, just behind the striker or strikers

Photograph: Colorsport

Go Ahead Eagles. Unlike most Ajax graduates, he did not come through the celebrated system but joined, at 19, from Willem II. No sooner did he arrive than the team took off, winning everything available.

"We were only 22, 23 and we were so confident, every game we would go on the pitch whistling, expecting to win 3-1 or 4-1. And we were so popular, everywhere we went. It was unbelievable." His eyes are full of the happy memories but then his voice drops as he adds "but it is impossible to keep a team at that kind of level."

Ravaged by Bosman, Ajax fell from grace, barely making the Uefa Cup last May as players came and

went. Eventually Overmars joined the exodus consummating a move to Arsenal which had been long forecast.

"I spoke to Dennis Bergkamp many times, though his being here was not the reason I came. He said he was much more settled than in Italy and felt good. I think this is a country where I can be successful and enjoy the football. When I see the Italian game it is like chess. I don't like playing against them as there is so much emphasis on defence."

Overmars will start the season on the left flank for Arsenal, who have reverted to a 4-4-2 system. "I do more running but I expect that," he said. "I used to be a midfielder at 15, 16

so I am used to it. I have been told I have three positions, left and right wing or, when Ian [Wright] or Dennis are suspended or injured, I could play in the middle behind the centre-forward." Although two-footed, he expresses a slight preference for the left whence he bewildered Norwich in Arsenal's 6-2 win on Monday night.

He has already noticed a few differences. "The speed of the game is much faster. Even in training it is very fast. At Ajax we have a few minutes passing, then attack, we wait for the moment. Here it is so quick mistakes are made. There is also more space, with Ajax we were always pushing to get through as

other teams defended with 10 against us."

He also believes the refereeing is lenient, though his team-mates, after 83 Premiership bookings and six dismissals last year, may not agree. Overmars, who has had one yellow card in his career, said: "When they kick me around my personality is not such that I get angry. I stand up and walk away. I am not a diver either, I prefer to try and score."

Overmars first came to prominence in England for winning the penalty which earned the Dutch a 2-2 draw in a World Cup qualifier at Wembley. It was won after he demonstrated his pace by skinning Des Walker. That pace is a big com-

ponent of his game and there were naturally fears that he would lose it when he suffered a serious knee injury early last year.

"I have done tests since and I am just as fast as before. Personally, I was never afraid I would not recover, it was simply a matter of time. I tried to get back for Euro '96 but it was impossible."

"While it was not nice, I learned from the experience. Not playing for six to eight months makes you much hungrier when you start again. You need the bad times to appreciate the good. With Ajax we won so many prizes we did not enjoy it properly. We won the European Cup and a day later we were training as normal and

'I want to win prizes. I am used to doing that every year. I am 24 and young and hungry'

we thought: 'We should enjoy this'. That was not always easy under Louis van Gaal, the then Ajax coach who has joined Barcelona. "He does have a temper," confirmed Overmars. "There were many times we were meeting after the game on a Monday when he got so angry his face went red. But he is so good as a coach. From player No 1 to No 20 he gives everyone the same time, the same feeling that he is important. The quality of him was that he could see what you were doing wrong and get you training on it."

"He was my trainer for five years. He bought me and improved me a lot. He demands a lot but you have to admire his energy. Every day he was there. He never missed anything in training. "But there were times when there were too many orders. After a while you wanted to do some things by instinct not the system."

And so to a Highbury great with expectation. "I don't feel under pressure because I expect things from myself also. When I was 18, Willem bought me for a lot of money, it was not a problem for me. Nor when Ajax bought me."

"I want to win prizes. I am used to doing that every year. I am 24 and young and hungry. For me there are two important prizes, the League and the Cup. There is also the Coca-Cola and, yes, Europe, but it is not the Champions' League."

That last line gives away the standards this small, neat and composed man is used to. Looking through his words he appears arrogant, but that has not come across in person as we have sat in the Hertfordshire hotel where he temporarily lodges. The afternoon is to be spent house-hunting in the local villages. Rumours that he is a playboy appear unfounded as he says: "I come from a small village and prefer to live in the country. I like to see the sights but London is so big, even Amsterdam is big for me."

He leaves with the complaint "the houses are so expensive round here". It is an odd comment for a highly paid star, but not for a farmer's son brought up to seek value for money and also to provide it. Arsenal may have found a diamond.

Bringing colour to the Black Country

As the remarkable becomes ever more routine in English football, it seems exceptional for a dreadlocked Dutchman and a bespectacled Frenchman to be managing major clubs in the cosmopolitan capital. The advent of a chunky, chain-smoking Scandinavian at Walsall may take more getting used to.

If Jan Sorensen, who is into his second month at Bescot Stadium, was not quite a Rund Gullit as a player, he certainly boasts a more impressive CV than Arsenal's Wenger. A playmaker in the mould of his fellow Dane Jan Molby, Sorensen was in the Club Brugge side which lost to Liverpool in the 1978 European Cup final.

Six years later, following Graeme Souness' departure to Sampdoria, Sorensen was close to taking his place at Anfield. There were also spells with Ajax (under Johan Cruyff) and Feyenoord, as well as numerous cups in the company of Allan Simonsen, Soren Lerby and Jesper Olsen.

Scepticism was nevertheless rife when Walsall, a middling Second Division outfit, unveiled

Chris Nicholl's successor. It was not just that they had entrusted their fortunes to a foreigner with no grounding in the domestic game or in management. The word was that he was a timeshare salesman from Tamworth.

Sorensen, now 42, separates fact and fiction with a hearty laugh and in near-perfect English. He was indeed out of the game for eight years. "Then again Kevin Keegan had seven years away before going to Newcastle and I'm a bigger name than him in Europe," he says, tongue not obviously in cheek. There is no attempt, either, to deny that he has been domiciled in the aforementioned town for five years, having married a Midlands girl he met while living in Portugal. That, he believes, was Walsall's good fortune rather than something to apologise for.

Yet the timeshare bit is, he suggests, somewhat fanciful. "After I stopped playing I lived in the Algarve, where there's not much to do except get drunk in a bar, play golf or try to earn some money. I sold real estate for a major British property company, though for the past

THE UNKNOWN IMPORT

Phil Shaw meets Jan Sorensen, the Dane who wants to make Walsall great

few years I was European marketing manager for a tennis bowling company."

How did he make the leap from that to preparing to kick off at the FA Cup semi-finalists, Chesterfield, today? "The football kept coming back to me. I watched dozens of matches last season at all levels. So when this job came up I wrote to the chairman [Jeff Bonser]. I asked what he had to lose by speaking to me for an hour."

"He invited me for a chat and it went on for about five hours. They checked me out in a way that probably no other candidate was, but I was happy with that because it meant their decision was the right one. They seemed to like my ideas, plus the fact that I've got contacts on the Continent, which is important now."

"People say Walsall are taking a risk, but I say I was the safest bet. What makes more sense: to take on someone who's been sacked a few times,

or someone that's proved himself at everything he's done?"

Walsall's set-up was already surprisingly European. The general manager, Paul Taylor, takes care of the scouting system, transfer negotiations and players' contracts. Sorensen and Derek Mounfield, whom he re-signed as player-coach weeks after Nicholl released him, are free to concentrate on the team.

Sorensen soon demonstrated a realistic streak in his revolutionary spirit, bringing the squad back in after lunch instead of letting them practise their putting or go shopping. "I've had to get across to them that it's better to have a shit month now and be able to cruise through the season than to be constantly trying to catch up on fitness levels."

Before beginning ball work in earnest, Sorensen put his players through two weeks of rigorous running. He is adamant that stamina and discipline are

prerequisites for playing the one-touch, attacking style in which he is steeped.

"You can't expect Second Division players to perform like Premiership stars. But you can still aspire to do it and I have a feeling my players fancy going for it. The British have always been good at the physical side but less so the tactical and the technical, though it's definitely improved in the last few years."

Crews, under Dario Gradi, won promotion from Walsall's level adhering to what Sorensen hails as pure football values. However, it was Bury, "a very powerful side", who took the title. Although that fact tempers his idealism, mention of top scorer Kyle Litherland's £500,000 switch to Coventry provokes an example of the positive thinking that led Walsall to choose him ahead of Willie Donachie, Gordon Cowans and Frank Stapleton.

"Kyle did brilliantly last season, but other sides were able to say: 'Stop him and we'll probably stop Walsall scoring'. That made us easier to defend against. I want us to score goals from all over the team."

Sounds not unlike Total Foot-

ball, as exemplified by Cruyff and Co. "You could say that," Sorensen says. "Put it this way, I won't complain if my right-back scores 15 this season."

In reality, he will be looking more to a French striker – Basile Boli's brother, Roger – whose capture this week has fuelled his natural optimism. "I haven't promised my chairman we'll go up this season. Our budget isn't the biggest, to say the least, but I do intend to do it within my two-year contract."

"Why not? There's 300,000 people in Walsall, so we'd pack the place out if Wolves, West Brom and Stoke were coming here in the First Division. And I don't plan to leave after that because the club would give me such a damn good contract that I'd have to stay!"

The hype and hopes of August often turn to sand by September, but Sorensen is sure he will not buckle under the legendary pressure of his new profession. "I thrive on stress," he asserts. "It can be a positive thing, to get the adrenalin going. It was fun doing a million-pound deal in the commercial world, but I'd sooner win 3-0."



Jan Sorensen: 'People say Walsall are taking a risk, but I say I was the safest bet'

Photograph: Peter Jay

When it was reported that Paul Merson was to be sold to Middlesbrough, most Arsenal fans simply could not believe that the story was true. The first I knew of the transfer was via a phone call from a gleeful Tottenham supporter who clearly felt that Merson's departure was potentially as damaging to Arsenal as the loss of Teddy Sheringham was to Spurs.

Merson was the Arsenal player most coveted by Tottenham fans, his inventive skills more in keeping with Tottenham's traditions than Arsenal's. During his 11 years at Highbury, Merson had lit up many a dreary Arsenal performance. He was a match-winner. He could go past defenders, he could create goalscoring chances for others and he could score goals himself, many of them spectacular.

Moreover, Merson is Arsenal through and through. He may have supported Chelsea as a boy, but as far as Arsenal fans are concerned the Merse is one of their own. When he confessed his addictions to booze, gambling and cocaine two years

No 218 Paul Merson

FAN'S EYE VIEW

By Paul Elliott

ago, the club and the fans stood by him. Their faith was rewarded when Merson returned to peak form in the past two seasons.

Merson and Tony Adams are Arsenal men, the kind of players who keep the Gunners' legendary team spirit alive. So why did Arsene Wenger sell Merson? So far, the Arsenal manager's explanations have proved insufficient. Certainly, as Wenger stressed, £4.5m is a lot of money for a 28-year-old, but surely Merson still has a few good years in him?

The sale of Merson is Wenger's first questionable decision as Arsenal manager. Until now, his transfer dealings have met with universal approval among Gunners fans. Wenger's first signing – Patrick Vieira from Milan – was rightly acclaimed as a masterstroke.

Bergkamp last season, but he is still a better player than Platt. Arsenal fans shed no tears when Wenger offloaded David Hillier, Eddie McGoldrick and Steve Morrow – mediocre footballers to a man. The Arsenal team had been full of such players during the latter part of George Graham's reign but Paul Merson was different. Merson, like Ian Wright, could win a game with one incisive piece of skill. It is conceivable that Arsenal have seen the best of Paul Merson, but if Wright can still perform to Premiership standard at 33, why not Merson?

Of course, if Arsenal win the Premiership next May, Paul Merson will not be missed. That's football, after all. Nobody pined for departed heroes like Anders Limpar or David Rocastle when the Gunners lifted three cups between 1993 and 1994. However, if Wenger's Arsenal fail to win a trophy this season, questions will be asked in the public houses around N5. Above all else, Arsenal fans may wonder: Where was the Merse when we needed him?

TEAM SHEET	
Barnsley v West Ham Last season: No corresponding fixture. Last five League matches: Barnsley WDWL; West Ham DWWDL. Long-term injury victim Davis is the only player missing from the Barnsley squad, which includes the new signings for their first Premiership match, while West Ham are without Hall and Dicks. Hammers' full-back Breaker is included, despite only being 80 per cent fit.	Leicester v Aston Villa Last season: 2-0. Last five League matches: Leicester LDWW; Aston Villa LDWL. Leicester's Taylor is out for the season after a training injury yesterday. Fenton will make his debut while Guppy has shaken off an ankle injury (ankle). Oakes is on stand-by. Defender Sturton is suspended.
Blackburn v Derby Last season: 2-2. Last five League matches: Blackburn DWWL; Derby WDWL. Blackburn's Berg joins Flowers (groin) and Sherwood (suspended) on the sidelines. Goalkeeper Plan will make his debut. Derby are without Asarovic (hamstring), but Jim Smith will introduce wing-back Barrie and striker Bell. Burton looks set to start on the bench.	Newcastle v Sheffield Wed Last season: 1-2. Last five League matches: Newcastle WDWL; Sheffield Wednesday WLLD. New signings Given, Pearce, Pastore, Nwankwo and Tomlinson could all start. Newcastle's Le Tissier is out with a broken elbow, others missing include Dodd, Lundstram and Neilson. Johnstone, Jones and Todd could make debuts. Bolton are without players: player of the year Fairclough. Elliott signed for Newcastle for £2.5m, will start.
Coventry v Chelsea Last season: 3-1. Last five League matches: Coventry WDWL; Chelsea LWDL. Record signing Le Saux could join Flo, De Goey and Poyet in making their Premiership debuts, but Babayaro and Lamboune are out with groin injuries. Soler will start alongside McAllister in the Coventry midfield, but out-of-contract Richardson will not play.	Southampton v Bolton Last season: No corresponding fixture. Last five League matches: Southampton WDWL; Bolton WDWL. Southampton's Le Tissier is out with a broken elbow, others missing include Dodd, Lundstram and Neilson. Johnstone, Jones and Todd could make debuts. Bolton are without players: player of the year Fairclough. Elliott signed for Newcastle for £2.5m, will start.
Everton v Crystal Palace Last season: 0-0. Last five League matches: Everton WDWL; Crystal Palace WDWL. Everton will give Speed (calf) a late fitness test, but new signings Ooster, Farnhill, Thomas and Bile – who is set to be named captain – are fit. Parkinson, Grant and Hitchcock are all injured. Warhurst will make his Palace debut, as will Lombardo as his registration has now been processed.	Wimbledon v Liverpool Last season: 2-1. Last five League matches: Wimbledon LDWW; Liverpool DWWL. Goodman (ankle) is the only player missing from the Wimbledon squad. Hughes could make his debut and Earle has recovered from injury. Barnes is likely to lose his place in the Liverpool midfield to Thomas and McGeer to Jones, Leonhardsen, Keane, Fowler and Banger are all injured.
Leeds v Arsenal Last season: 0-0. Last five League matches: Leeds LDWW; Arsenal WDWL. Hasselbaink, Hopkin, Haland, Robertson and Ribeiro all make their Leeds debuts, but George Graham is without Sharpe and Jackson. Arsenal are without Adams (suspended), while Grant faces a late test. Keown and Dixon are injured – Upson and Marshall stand by and Overmars and Platt will start.	Tottenham v Manchester Utd Last season: 1-2. Last five League matches: Tottenham LDWL; Man United WDWL. Spurs are without new signing Dominguez, who has not yet got clearance, and also miss the injured Anderson and Armstrong. Merson will partner Ferdinand up front. Alex Ferguson will field his Cherry Shield-winning side, which will mean a return to White Hart Lane for Sheringham.

